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ABSTRACT

This study was done to see if readability levels printed on recreational reading books were as accurate as when the Fry formula and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level were applied to them. Three descriptive passages from each of 60 recreational reading books were analyzed using the Fry formula and the Flesch-Kincaid formula. The data was compared to the publisher's stated reading levels (levels 4.0 through 5.9). The hypothesis stated that there would be high correlation between the readability levels of recreational reading books as identified by the Fry formula and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level. However, this hypothesis was rejected and this study shows that readability formulas and stated reading levels were only guidelines and that other factors needed to be considered when choosing appropriate reading material. (Contains 31 references and 3 tables of data; appendixes contain recreational reading passages and data collected from passages.) (Author/RS)

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Comparison of Recreational Reading Books Levels Using the Fry Readability Graph and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level

by

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Abstract

This study was done to see if readability levels printed on recreational reading books were as accurate as when the Fry formula and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level were applied to them. Three descriptive passages from each recreational reading book were analyzed using the Fry formula and the Flesch-Kincaid formula. The data was compared to the publisher's stated reading levels. The hypothesis stated that there would be high correlation between the readability levels of recreational reading books as identified by the Fry formula and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level. However, this hypothesis was rejected and this study shows that readability formulas and stated reading levels were only guidelines and that other factors needed to be considered when choosing appropriate reading material.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my mother for all the love and support throughout my life. Without her I would not be where I am today.

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“Readability formulas have commonly been used as a major resource for determining the difficulty of material”(Richardson & Morgan, 1997.) They were developed in order to match reader ability to the text difficulty (Rush, 1985.) Readability formulas assumed that shorter sentences and fewer syllables resulted in easier reading materials. In contrast, long sentences and numerous multisyllabic words were thought to be more difficult to read.

Readability formulas were needed to produce accurate readability levels to support a child's interest in reading. When a teacher, parent or child has selected a book for independent reading time, the book needed to state a dependable reading level. Children should not be exposed to a book on their instructional levels for independent reading. Frustration had occurred when books contained too many words that were unknown (Norton, 1991.) Children who tried to read from a book that was too hard were unable to comprehend the material (Burns & Roe, 1992.) In addition, teachers and parents needed to be aware that readability formulas did not determine conceptual content, figurative language, or stylistic peculiarities (Norton, 1991.) According to Fry(1986), “factors that have increased readability levels were paragraph length and organization, cohesion, signal words, active voice, personal words and sentences, imaginability, subheadings, referent use, illustrations, topic and example selection.” Fry also emphasized that readability formulas predicted comprehension, oral reading errors, and inclinations to continue reading.

The readability of many textbooks has been studied over the years. Studies by Wood & Wood, 1988, Kinder, Bursuck, & Epstein, 1992, and Schneider, 1991 determined that content specific textbooks should not be determined by readability formulas alone. Background knowledge and experience(Kinder, 1992) as well as complexity of content area and structural form of the text(Wood, 1988) were mentioned as additional factors when selecting a textbook using readability formulas. Content specific textbooks should not be written to a formula, which in turn might have created the "dumbing down" of some texts to fit a readability level. These formulas were not intended to be used as a writer's guide. "Writing to a formula does not create a more readable textbook"(Schneider, 1991.) English, mathematics, social studies, science, and health books were in most cases just more difficult to read (Burns & Roe, 1992.)

Only a few studies have been done concerning readability levels of recreational reading books. In 1986, a study by Schafer determined the readability levels of thirteen Newbery Medal books using three popular readability formulas. The three formulas were FOG Index, Fry Readability formula, and the Flesch Grade Level formula. The average readability levels were determined, then the books were compared by grade levels. The results indicated that the only three books were below the sixth grade reading, four books fell within the sixth grade reading level, and four books required a reading level

of eighth grade or above. In 1998, Leal and Chamberlain-Solecki used the Fry Readability formula to determine readability levels of all Newbery Medal Books. They determined that the books had a level of difficulty meant for older students. The Newbery Medal Award intended for children only awarded books that have readability levels starting at the fourth grade. When both studies were compared, it was identified that the readability levels of identical books, at times, seemed to differ. Although both studies used the Fry Readability formula, differences ranged from .3 – 2.0 grade levels. A reason for this difference was not able to be determined since the Fry Readability formula proved to be a valid formula when establishing readability of a text.

Recreational reading books were chosen for this study because they were not content specific. Expository writing in content specific material usually contained a higher frequency of multisyllabic words that increased readability levels. The recreational reading books contained narrative writing. Determining the readability levels of recreational reading books was more functional. In order to give children appropriate materials on their instructional levels or independent levels, readability of the material needed to be associated with their appropriate reading levels. According to informal reading inventories procedures, instructional levels are found when comprehension is 75% or higher and word recognition is at 95% or higher (Burns & Roe, 1992.)

Hypothesis

To provide additional evidence on this topic, the following study was undertaken. It was hypothesized that there would be high correlation between the readability levels of recreational reading books as identified by the Fry formula and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level.

Procedures

Sixty fictional novels were selected for this study. Each novel had a reading level that was predetermined by its publisher. Each reading level from 4.0 through 5.9 was represented three times. Multiple publishers were represented.

Data was collected by use of the Fry Formula and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level at three parts of each recreational reading book. (see Appendix A) The three parts were selected from the beginning, middle, and end of each book. The three descriptive passages selected in each book were used for both formulas. (see Appendix B) The results were then compared to the stated grade level printed on the books. (see Conclusions)

The Fry Readability Graph was developed by Edward Fry in the 1960's. In 1977, Fry revised his graph to include explanations, directions, and an extension to the 17th-grade level. (Klare, 1984) The Fry formula focused on number of syllables in the words used and the sentence length for each of the three 100-word passages from a single selection. (Richardson & Morgan, 1997)

The score was read as a grade level. The Fry formula determined readability on the instructional level (Richardson & Morgan, 1997). According to Fusaro (1988), the Fry Graph has been proven to be accurate within one grade level of the Dale-Chall and Flesch formulas. Fusaro (1988) and Wood (1988) reiterated that Fry (1977) reported that the Fry Readability Graph correlated highly with the Dale-Chall Readability formula and with the Flesch Reading Ease formula, thus establishing their concurrent validity. This popular readability formula was a quick and easy formula to follow.

The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level was instituted by the use of Microsoft Word 97. This identification method was derived from the Flesch Ease formula. It was based on the average number of words per sentence and the average number of syllables per 100 words. (Jones, 1993) The readability level was presented as a grade level. According to Klare (1988), the Flesch-Kincaid and Fry grade level differed by no more than one grade to McCall-Crabbs Standard Test Lessons in Reading.

Results

As seen in Table I, there is little correlation between the publisher's stated reading grade levels and the reading grade levels determined by the Flesch-

Table I

Comparison of Flesch-Kincaid Reading Grade Level with Publisher's Reading Level

Sample	M	SD	t	r
Publisher	4.95	.58	-2.38	.34
Flesch-Kincaid	5.46	1.57		

Sig. < .05

Kincaid formula. There is only an 11% commonality between the publisher's reading grade levels and the Flesch-Kincaid reading grade levels.

In Table II, the results showed that there is little correlation between the

Table II

Comparison of Fry Reading Grade Levels with Publisher's Reading Grade Levels

Sample	M	SD	t	r
Publisher	4.95	.58	-4.81	.43
Fry	5.85	1.33		

Sig. < .01

publisher's stated reading grade levels and the reading grade levels determined by the Fry Graph. There is only an 18% commonality between the publisher's stated reading grade levels and the Fry Graph reading grade levels.

As seen in Table III, only three books from the Flesch-Kincaid formula and two books from the Fry formula exactly matched the publisher. The Flesch-Kincaid formula had twenty-two books and the Fry formula had twenty-one books that were between one to two grade levels different from the publisher's

level. The Flesch-Kincaid formula produced eight books while the Fry formula had ten books that differed by more than two grade levels.

Table III

Difference Chart of Publisher with Flesch-Kincaid and Fry

Book Title	Publisher's Stated Reading Level	Average Flesch- Kincaid Reading Level	Difference from Publisher	Average Fry Reading Level	Difference from Publisher
Honey Girl	5.9	5.9	0	6.3	+ .4
Mindy Wise	5.9	5.7	-.2	6.7	+ .8
Cold Shoulder...	5.9	5.8	-.1	6.3	+ .4
Babe...	5.8	6.8	+1.0	7.0	+1.2
Secret of the Andes	5.8	4.1	-1.7	4.7	-1.1
Tale of the Souv...	5.8	6.1	+ .3	6.3	+ .5
Paddington	5.7	7.2	+1.5	7.7	+2.0
Night of a Thous...	5.7	6.7	+1.0	7.7	+2.0
The Enormous...	5.7	6.5	+ .8	5.7	0
Take to the Sky...	5.6	5.2	-.4	5.3	-.3
Voyages of ...	5.6	5.0	-.6	6.3	+ .7
Trouble River	5.6	6.7	+1.1	7.0	+1.4
Johnny Tremain	5.5	4.6	-.9	5.3	-.2
Grizzly	5.5	3.6	-1.9	4.3	-1.2
Go for it, Patti	5.5	5.3	-.2	6.0	+ .5
My Babysitter...	5.4	4.8	-.6	5.0	-.4
One-Man Team	5.4	5.6	+ .2	6.3	+ .9
Anastasia at...	5.4	5.9	+ .5	7.0	+1.6
Horse Crazy...	5.3	10.1	+4.8	8.7	+3.4
Charlie Pippen	5.3	4.9	-.4	6.0	+ .7
Everyone Else's...	5.3	4.1	-1.2	5.0	-.3
Everything Stinks	5.2	4.5	-.7	5.7	+ .5
All But Alice	5.2	6.9	+1.7	7.0	+1.8
World's Worst...	5.2	7.5	+2.3	8.0	+2.8
The Return of ...	5.1	7.7	+2.6	7.3	+2.2
The Diamond War	5.1	8.4	+3.3	8.0	+2.9
Beethoven's Cat	5.1	5.7	+ .6	7.3	+2.2
Five Children ...	5.0	7.6	+2.6	7.0	+2.0
Frank and ...	5.0	3.6	-1.4	4.3	-.7
Ramona the ...	5.0	9.3	+4.3	8.3	+3.3

Continuation of Table III

Book Title	Publisher's Stated Reading Level	Average Flesch- Kincaid Reading Level	Difference from Publisher	Average Fry Reading Level	Difference from Publisher
Chocolate Fever	4.9	4.8	-.1	4.7	-.2
Allie's Wild...	4.9	6.3	+1.4	7.3	+2.4
The Tiny ...	4.9	6.9	+2.0	7.0	+2.1
Alaskan ...	4.8	6.2	+1.4	6.3	+1.5
Goblins in the ...	4.8	5.9	+1.1	6.3	+1.3
Scream of the Cat	4.8	6.5	+1.7	6.0	+1.2
Harvey's Horrible...	4.7	3.7	-1.0	4.7	0
Escape From Fire...	4.7	5.7	+1.0	6.0	+1.3
The Beast	4.7	3.4	-1.3	4.0	-.7
Lily's Crossing	4.6	5.0	+.4	6.0	+1.4
The Mystery Box	4.6	5.0	+.4	6.0	+1.4
Orp Goes to the ...	4.6	3.4	-1.2	4.0	-.6
James and the ...	4.5	7.0	+2.5	6.0	+1.5
Mrs. Abercorn ...	4.5	7.5	+3.0	7.0	+2.5
The Bunnysitters	4.5	4.7	+.2	5.3	+.8
Scary Scary ...	4.4	3.7	-.7	4.7	+.3
Sport	4.4	3.8	-.6	4.3	-.1
Tale of the ...	4.4	5.6	+1.2	6.0	+1.6
What It's All About	4.3	3.8	-.5	4.7	+.4
Dunc's Doll	4.3	3.6	-.7	3.7	-.6
Making the Team	4.3	3.5	-.8	3.7	-.6
Ortherwise Known...	4.2	5.8	+1.6	6.0	+1.8
Then Again, ...	4.2	3.4	-.8	3.7	-.5
Young Indiana ...	4.2	3.7	-.5	3.3	-.9
The Gift of the ...	4.1	6.0	+1.9	6.3	+2.2
Wayside School...	4.1	2.7	-1.4	3.0	-1.1
Gooflumps ...	4.1	4.8	+.7	5.3	+1.2
What is the ...	4.0	6.1	+2.1	7.0	+3.0
Goosebumps ...	4.0	4.0	0	4.7	+.7
It's New! It's ...	4.0	4.0	0	4.7	+.7

Conclusions

The hypothesis that there would be a high correlation between the formulas and the publisher's reading levels was rejected. The Flesch-Kincaid formula and the Fry formula do not have high correlation with the publisher's stated reading grade levels.

The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level is easily accessible through Microsoft. The Fry formula is also an easy to administer formula that is popular among educators. Both formulas give an estimate of reading grade levels. Although the Flesch-Kincaid and the Fry Graph do not match the publishers determined levels, these two formulas can provide a guideline. Syllable counts and sentence counts are not the only important factors in determining readability levels. Other factors to be examined within a recreational reading book are subject matter, illustrations, and writing styles. Background knowledge and interest level of the reader also needs to be addressed when choosing appropriate leisure books. Readability formulas are not to be used as the only means to find suitable reading material. Publishers only provide an estimate reading grade level even though the grade they provide seems to be very specific. It should be noted that the three selected passages may not provide an accurate picture of the entire book. Dialogue within the book will lower its readability level.

Another issue related to readability levels is that many publishers do not provide reading levels for their leisure reading books. While searching through

three public libraries, the pattern that seemed evident was that only soft covered books gave reading levels. Also, certain publishers will provide only age ranges and/or interest levels on their books. This latter method provides the children, parents, and teachers an obvious estimation of readability. The two formulas from this study seem to give an exact reading grade level that can be deceiving to the public even though it is supposed to be read as an estimate. Recreational reading books need to be examined by use of many modes. Readability formulas should only be used as an additional method.

Readability : Related Literature

Beginning in the 1920's, readability of written text concerned those in the field of education. Attention to readability was prompted by the changes in social conditions and in society. More students than ever were attending secondary schools. These students were often the first in their families to continue their education. During that time period, a concern for appropriate text difficulty was addressed due to the fact that the textbooks being used were written for the earlier secondary population that had a stronger academic background. Textbooks seemed to have been too difficult for many of the newer secondary students (Chall, 1988; Chall & Conard, 1991). The population of the students during the 1920's had also changed from the previous years. It contained more children of immigrant families that had limitations in the English language. Increased attention towards text difficulty may also have been due to the change of approaches to teach reading. The emphasis of phonics had shifted to an approach that focused on sight words or meaning (Chall & Conard, 1991). From the 1920's to the 1960's, vocabulary counts decreased because the emphasis of sight word recognition resulted in a need for lower vocabulary loads in reading textbooks (Chall, 1988).

In 1921, Thorndike published *Teacher's Word Book*. This was the first book to record an extensive frequency word count of the English language (Chall, 1988). This book was of significance to reading teachers that wanted to introduce words in a justifiable order (Rubin, 1985). This objective measure of estimating

word difficulty was the first milestone for readability research (Klare, 1984). In 1923, the readability of textbooks became an interest among science teachers in the junior high. These teachers were concerned about the necessity to teach vocabulary instead of facts and generalizations as a result of the number of technical terms in their textbooks. In 1923, Lively and Pressely researched and developed the first readability formula to estimate text difficulty (Klare, 1984, 1988; Chall & Conard, 1984). This formula compared 1000 words from a book to Thorndike's *Teacher's Word Book*. Vocabulary difficulty was important in determining readability of text.

Since the first readability formula was developed, researchers concentrated on vocabulary control and readability measurements. Vocabulary control studies involved the examination of the effective vocabulary for learning to read from primary level textbooks. Readability studies focused on the comprehensibility of content specific texts and materials for the middle and upper elementary grades, high school, college, and adults. Although both areas started in the 1920's, vocabulary control was studied more in the earlier years (Chall, 1988). Since primary level textbooks were studied earlier for vocabulary control, original readability formulas were devised for children's reading materials (Davison, 1984).

In 1928, Vogel and Washburne developed a formula that predicted reading scores needed to read a certain book. This formula took the form of a regression

equation that allowed large amounts of data to be integrated. This became the prototype for most formulas (Bruce & Rubin, 1988, Klare, 1988).

What Makes a Book Readable by Gray and Leary, presented a formula for predicting reading difficulty of adult reading material. Gray and Leary used style factors for this readability formula. They originally had 288 factors that were classified under four headings (content, style of expression and presentation, format, and general factors of generalization) that were ranked from most important to least important (Klare, 1988, 1984). From the original list, 44 factors occurred often enough to be counted reliable. Then 20 factors were extracted that were related to adults of limited reading ability. Eventually, five factors were used for their formula. Their procedure of combining only style factors in a regression equation became the typical pattern for formula development (Klare, 1988).

In 1938, Washburne and Morphet provided a formula that produced scores on a grade-placement scale. Semantic and syntactic factors were used for the formula (Klare, 1988). Lorge's formula appeared shortly after in 1939. Lorge used the McCall and Crabbs *Standard Test Lessons in Reading* (1925) as a criterion. This simple, efficient formula for fourth through sixth grades used prepositional phrases, number of sentences, and hard words (Gilbert, 1972). This was the beginning of the easy to apply formulas (Lorge, 1939). Readability formulas grew in popularity. The formulas of Washburne and Morphet and of

Lorge provided grade-level scores and were more convenient than earlier formulas.

In 1943, Rudolph Flesch published the Flesch formula using the original McCall-Crabbs *Standard Test Lessons in Reading* as a criterion. He designed this formula for general adult reading material. His formula was partially based upon Lorge's calculations that proved to include an error. In 1948, Lorge presented a recalculation of Flesch's formula. When Flesch found that his formula was very time-consuming, the count of personal references was misleading, and the scoring system was unsatisfactory, he developed two new formulas in that same year. The two formulas, the Reading Ease formula and the Human Interest formula, were also based upon the original McCall-Crabbs *Standard Test Lessons in Reading* (Klare, 1974-1975). The original Flesch formula and the simplified Flesch Reading Ease formulas were proven to be highly reliable (England, Thomas & Paterson, 1953). Flesch's Reading Ease formula became one of the most popular readability measurements (Klare, 1974-1975, 1984). Flesch's Human Interest formula was subjective and sensitive to the characteristics of the reader. Consequently, this formula did not become popular (Rubin, 1985). In 1951, Flesch provided a chart with his two formulas for quick determination of scores in *How to Test Readability*. In 1968, Fang made the first attempt to automate the Flesch Reading Ease formula by using syllable counters. Other researchers expanded his attempt to create their own version of automating the

formula. However, these researchers chose to count letters instead of syllables which was a less accurate method of estimating syllables (Klare, 1974-1975). Microcomputers have increased the use of readability formulas. In place of counting words and sentences by hand, a computer program calculated the readability estimates of selected text. The Flesch Reading Ease score can be accessed through Word97 by Microsoft (1983-1997). It also provides the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score which was derived from the Flesch Reading Ease formula in 1975. Kincaid used the Gates-MacGintie Reading Test as the basis for its grade levels in the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level scores (Klare, 1988).

In 1948, Dale and Chall analyzed Lorge and Flesch's formulas. He determined that a larger word list and a shorter formula without counting personal references were necessary. Dale and Chall used the same passages from McCall-Crabbs *Lessons* as Lorge and Flesch. In 1948, the Dale-Chall formula was tested for additional validation on health-education material and current-events magazines. This easy, two-factor formula had predictions that correlated highly with readability experts and expert teachers in Social Studies (Dale & Chall, 1948). This formula became widely used in education (Klare, 1984).

In 1952, another two-factor formula was established. This formula, the Gunning formula, used syllable length of words instead of a word list (Davison, 1984).

In 1953, Spache created a popular formula intended for Grades 1-3. He used the word list approach for his formula (Klare, 1984). Sentence length and percentage of "hard" words outside the Dale list are the two elements of this formula (Froese, 1971).

In 1963, Edward Fry first published the Fry Readability formula in his book, *Teaching Faster Reading: A Manual*, in England (Klare, 1974-1975). In 1968, Edward Fry published this formula in America. He wanted to present a faster and simpler method of determining readability that would be widely used by teachers, librarians, and publishers (Fry, 1968). The Fry Graph was designated for grade levels 1 through 12 and college level when determining readability of prose (Longo, 1982). In 1977, The Fry Readability formula was extended to determine readability to the seventeenth grade level. Fry stated in his formula instructions to omit proper nouns from the word count. Editors of text pointed out that proper nouns should not be omitted since it was too difficult to get the readability grade low enough to sell their books. Fry realized that his readability grade levels were a little lower than other formulas when the graph was used without proper nouns. He determined that proper nouns do contribute to the difficulty of the material and decided to include them at that time (Fry, 1977). A study by Britton and Lumpkin (1977) compared the latest Fry formula and five other formulas plus publisher designations. The data showed close agreement in grade level designation and almost perfect agreement in ranking. They also

tended to support the inclusion of proper nouns (Fry, 1977). In 1982, Longo compared the Fry Readability Graph to the Dale-Chall formula, the Flesch formula, and the Farr-Jenkins-Paterson formulas. This study presented strong evidence for the validity of the upper levels of the graph (Longo, 1982). In 1989, Fry developed a Short Passage Readability Formula. This method was to be utilized only for passages under 300 words (Burns, Roe & Ross, 1992).

In 1965, Coleman was the first to use the cloze procedure as a criterion for a readability formula (Klare, 1984). In this procedure, every Nth word from a text was replaced with a blank. The subject was required to fill in the blanks with the correct words (Williams, 1974).

In 1965, Bormuth had begun to experiment with cloze criteria. He published an extensive analysis in that same year. His results and the 330 calibrated cloze passages provided the basis for much readability research. In 1971, Froese investigated the validity of the Dale-Chall readability ratings for sixth grade science textbooks when compared to an independent criterion of language difficulty in cloze units. Froese concluded that cloze tests were reliable measures of language difficulty in group testing. The cloze test was also valid measures of language difficulty as demonstrated by their concurrent validity with intelligence test scores and with reading vocabulary and reading comprehension scores. The Dale-Chall readability formula, however, was not a valid measure of sixth grade science textbooks when the cloze procedure was used as a criterion.

Froese recommended that previous research of the Dale-Chall formula should be re-examined, to use the cloze procedure when matching a book to a reader, and to replicate his study with different grade levels, books, and population (Froese, 1971). In 1975, Bormuth proposed a new formula to be used manually by teachers. This new and easier formula used word length and sentence length variables along with the difficulty of the passage in terms of cloze means.

Since the 1920's, numerous researchers have developed their own formulas to estimate the level of reading in a written text. Earlier formulas were more complex than the more modern ones. Specific factors that might cause or correlate with difficulties in comprehension were examined for each formula. Basically, each formula examined one or more properties of sentences and words (Davison, 1984). Davison (1984) identified that readability formula originators took 100-word samples and found averages for some or all of the following:

1. Properties of sentences
 - a. sentence length in words or syllables
 - b. the number of coordinate or subordinate sentences
 - c. the number of prepositional phrases
 - d. the number of pronouns and definite articles
 - e. the number of personal references
2. Properties of words
 - a. infrequent or frequent words (from word lists)
 - b. unfamiliar or familiar words (from word lists)
 - c. polysyllabic words or monosyllables
 - d. percentage of Latin or Germanic roots
 - e. abstract or concrete references (W)

In 1985, Rubin states that the most generally used readability formulas in education were: Dale & Chall, 1948; Dolch, 1948; Flesch, 1954; Fry, 1968; Gunning, 1952; Spache, 1978 and Sticht, 1972, 1975(S).

With the use of faster and simpler readability formulas and computers to aid in determining text difficulty, many different types of professionals found uses for readability levels. Readability formulas have a strong influence within the classroom through educational publishers, librarians, adoption committees, and text designers. Outside of education, several states have adopted criteria for insurance policies and contracts using readability formulas. Redish (1979) reported that in Massachusetts and Minnesota, criteria scores were specified in the Flesch Reading Ease formula for insurance policies. Also, thirty other states have laws that required similar standards (Rubin, 1985). Some banks, such as Citibank in 1973, also simplified forms and documents for fear of losses in uncollected debts. Readability formulas were also being used in advertising, store catalog guides, and governmental contracts (Fry, 1987). In 1991, Burton did a study on the readability of bank brochures and daily newspapers when using the Fry Readability Graph. He determined that all thirty brochures studied were at a readability level that was beyond the comprehension of 62% of US adults. From the twenty-six newspapers, he found that about 67% of US adults would not understand the content which was at a 12.5 readability level (Burton, 1991).

Ever since readability formulas were introduced, they had become faster and easier to use. Estimating reading difficulty in written material also had become a standard for many educational institutions. Consequently, some editors and publishers were informed of the need for specific grade levels for textbooks. Publishers noted that readability formulas contained limitations. They did not measure concepts, quality of writing, or interest levels (Chall, 1979). Readability formulas also did not consider background knowledge of a student (Fry, 1986). In 1982, McConnell evaluated two studies from 1981. Gallagher and Thompson applied the Flesch formula to thirteen economics texts while the Swinburne Readability Lab used formulas from Dale-Chall, modified Dale-Chall, and Fry for nine economic books. McConnell's data suggested that the texts were readable at appropriate grade levels although there was no consistency in the absolute reading levels (McConnell, 1982). Although readability formulas were not intended to influence material written, it continued to be used to create appropriate reading levels. Fry emphasized that readability formulas did not create the "dumbing down" of textbooks. The writers that used the readability formula to write their textbooks should have received criticism for misusing the formula to obtain lower readability scores (Chall, 1988; Fry, 1986). Readability formulas were not to be used as writers guides (Fry, 1986). They were to only provide estimates of text difficulty. In 1972, Gilbert assessed ten science series using the Spache, Dale-Chall, Lorge, and Fry readability formulas. The Spache formula was applicable

to the primary grades while the Dale-Chall was applicable at or above the fourth grade. The Fry formula was appropriate for all grade levels. The results of this study indicated that publishers of elementary science textbooks attempt to adjust reading levels of their books to that of the children. Science terminology and sentence structure account for differences in text readability levels and grade levels. Also, this study indicated that the four readability formulas measure different aspects of the reading and have little correlation. Gilbert suggests that science series should provide vocabulary and chapter previews. When analyzing texts, he suggested to use a variety of formulas and to evaluate texts to their criteria of reading (Gilbert, 1972).

There are many factors to be considered when determining readability levels of written material. Readability formulas should not be used before examining a book for difficult content, difficult figurative language, and stylistic characteristics that might impede comprehension. Interest level and book content should also be evaluated by an adult (Norton, 1991). In the *Raygor Readability Estimator* (1979), publishers printed on their product that interest level, reader experience, personal variables, style, or syntax were not measured. It mentioned that material may show a low grade but may have a high concept level. Also, inaccurate results would occur if you used poetry, test items, or other types of nonprose (Rubin, 1985). Evidence of inaccurate results were seen when comparing studies completed in 1976 by Guidry and Knight, in 1986 by Schafer,

and in 1998 by Leal and Chamberlain-Solecki. All three studies determined readability levels of Newbery Medal books. The 1976 study used the readability formulas of Dale-Chall, Flesch, Fry and Lorge for the 53 books from 1922-1974. The 1986 study used the Gunning Fog Index and the Fry formula for the thirteen books from 1974-1986. The 1998 study used the Fry formula for the 76 books from 1922-1997. When the first two studies were compared to the last, it proved that there must have been a variance in passage selections when using the Fry formula. In the 1976 study, seven books matched, thirteen books were within one year, and sixteen books showed a one to two year difference in readability grade level than the 1998 study. In the 1986 study, one book matched, five were within one year, and seven books showed a one to two year difference in readability grade level than the 1998 study. Leal and Chamberlain-Solecki (1998) stated that readability outcomes could vary greatly depending on the passages selected. Dialogue caused a lower readability level than in descriptive text. Poetry caused a change in readability levels since some poems did not contain punctuation to indicate sentence length. Basically, readability formulas were not created to match the reader to the text but to provide a way to choose appropriate material for specific individuals (Bruce & Rubin, 1987). There are many variables to be considered when using readability formulas, therefore they should not be used exclusively (Klare, 1988; Chall, 1988).

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Appendix A : Recreational Reading Passages

Title: "Honey Girl"
Author: Madge Harrah
Publisher: The Hearst Corporation
Publisher's R.L.: 5.9

First passage:

Dorothy looked up. Two boys leaned out over the river, their stomachs pressed against the bridge railing. Dorothy knew them at once. She knew them because of the way Jimmy Johnson's fat face glistened like a full moon under that mop of ugly orange-colored hair and because George Carter's head was so narrow it looked as if it had been squeezed through the wringer of a washing machine. Dorothy hated them both. She had hated them for the past month and a half, right from the first day of sixth grade when they had started making fun of her because

Second passage:

She slithered to the bottom of the loft and peered over the edge. She could barely make out the shadowy shapes of the stove, the chairs, the pallet against one wall where Oran lay gently snoring. Nowhere did she see the shape of one small girl.

Now thoroughly alarmed, she slipped over the edge of the loft to the top of the chest and down to the floor. She grabbed her mother's shawl from a chair and flung it around her shoulders, then ran barefoot onto the deck. The stairs overhead glimmered like flowers of frost in the dark sky.

Third passage:

She scurried out onto the deck of the houseboat, grabbed her bee hat, and darted lightly over the plank to shore. The water of the cove where they were anchored gleamed brightly under the noonday sun and reflected, as in a mirror, the bluffs of the White River. The White River. In Arkansas!

Dorothy planted her fists on her hips and nodded with satisfaction. They had made it. In spite of Lake Pepin and wing dams and sloughs and storms and illness, they had made it, over a thousand miles down the Mississippi River and up the White River to

Title: "Mindy Wise"
 Author: Marilyn Kaye
 Publisher: The Hearst Corporation
 Publisher's R.L.: 5.9

First passage:

I'm hungry. I'm sitting in a synagogue, a house of worship, where I'm supposed to be feeling terribly religious and spiritual, but all I can think about is food and what I'm going to eat when I get out of here. It's not easy being spiritual when visions of pizza are floating through your mind.

Stop it, Mindy, I tell myself. You don't get to eat until sundown, and that's at least eight hours away. You're just torturing yourself. Besides, you're not supposed to be thinking about food. Not today.

Today is Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish

Second passage:

I followed right behind them. From the expressions on the other girls' faces, I could tell they were just as surprised to see Jason here as I was. We watched the couple in awe, and I marveled at Jason's lack of self-consciousness. Here he was the only boy in a room full of girls, and he didn't seem the least bit uncomfortable. Valerie's eyes drifted toward them for a moment, but then she must have decided the zombies were more interesting.

Jason and Dani flopped down on the glass coffee table. I couldn't help wincing when I imagined what my

Third passage:

It was almost over. Any minute now, the rabbi would be blowing the shofar, the big curved horn that signaled the end of the Day of Atonement. And if I was hungry before, I was starving now. My food fantasies were getting bigger and more detailed. It wasn't just pizza anymore. It was pizza with pepperoni and mushrooms and peppers, maybe even the Supreme Deluxe with seven toppings.

I thought I'd feel better by now. I'd confessed, over and over and over. I'd thought about my sins, and how sorry I was that I'd committed them. I'd repented and atoned.

Title: "Cold Shoulder Road"

Author: Joan Aiken

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.9

First passage:

They had by now reached the inner end of the jetty and turned right along the harbor front. A thin slip of moon was rising, and it was possible to see that, though not destroyed, the town had suffered in the flood. Bits of the seawall were missing, a number of houses had boarded-up windows or stove-in doors; chunks of masonry lay here and there on the muddy, sandy roadway.

Another few minutes' walking and they could clearly hear the sound of music ahead of them: a tune intended to be cheerful was being played slowly and dolefully on a

Second passage:

Dusk was falling as they approached Womenswold. They made a circuitous approach, crossing the Roman road farther south and then working back from a northeasterly direction. The little village- no more than two farms, some outbuildings, and a bridge over a brook- was three-quarters surrounded by forest. The grove Is remembered lay a mile or so west of the houses. There were about a dozen trees, oaks and chestnuts, all equally huge, grouped together on a knoll.

The mist had begun to thicken again as dusk fell, so that the bulky shape that was lodged in the middle of the

Third passage:

With a shriek of joy, Pye raced toward Ruth and Arun. She was hugged, passed from one to the other.

Now suddenly there came an outbreak of shots and angry shouting in the town below. There were puffs of smoke. Heads turned that way. The crowd on the hillside was momentarily hushed. But it was only for a moment. More and more people came pouring from both directions. Up the hill from the town. Down the hill from the Channel Tunnel entrance that lay beyond. And all of them assembled in front of the house.

They were all singing. Some

Title: "Babe: The Gallant Pig"

Author: Dick King-Smith

Publisher: Random House, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.8

First passage:

In the farmyard, Fly, the black-and-white collie, was beginning to train her four puppies. For some time now they had shown an instinctive interest in anything that moved, driving it away or bringing it back, turning it to left or right, in fact herding it. They had begun with such things as passing beetles, but were now ready, Fly considered, for larger creatures.

She set them to work on Mrs. Hogget's ducks.

Already the puppies were beginning to move as sheepdogs do, seeming to creep rather than walk, heads held low ears pricked, eyes fixed on the angrily quacking birds

Second passage:

Fly's suspicions about what the farmer was up to grew rapidly over the next weeks. It soon became obvious to her that he was constructing, on his own land, a practice course. From the top of the field where the rustlers had come, the circuit which he laid out ran all around the farm, studded with hazards to be negotiated. Some were existing gateways or gaps. Some he made, with hurdles, or lines of posts between which the sheep had to be driven. Some were extremely difficult. One, for example, a plank bridge over a stream, was so narrow that

Third passage:

Unmoving, held by the magic of the moment, the crowd watched with no sound but a great sigh of amazement. No one could quite believe his eyes. No one seemed to notice that the wind had dropped and the rain had stopped. No one was surprised when a single shaft of sunshine came suddenly through a hole in the gray clouds and shone full upon the great sarsen stone. Slowly, with his long strides, Hogget left it and walked to the little enclosure of hurdles, the final test of his shepherding. He opened its gate and stood, silent still, while

Title: "Secret of the Andes"

Author: Ann Nolan Clark

Publisher: Penguin Books USA, Inc.

Publisher R.L.: 5.8

First passage:

The old man got up stiffly from his place on the rock. It was true. The boy had seen no people in the eight years he had lived here. He had been too young to remember what had gone before. Chuto looked around at the world that so tightly enclosed them.

They lived in a hidden valley high up on the rock slope of a mountain. Mountain peak upon mountain peak, sheer and hard and glistening in frozen mantles of ice and snow, encircled them. There were but two openings into their hidden world. One, where they stood now, was

Second passage:

There was a silver llama in the flock now, stately and proud and respected by the other llamas. It did not belong to Cusi. It knew Cusi only as the shepherd boy who tended the flock.

But Cusi did not care. Some day he would own a silver llama, and meanwhile he had the new little black one and the older, larger, proud beautiful black one that was Misti.

Misti was Cusi's companion and had been since the day he had been driven out of his mother's corral. He loved the boy and understood him. Now Cusi began to train

Third passage:

That was his mother, he thought. She had spoken truly then when she had called him son. That was his mother, and now she was gone. But no. She was not gone. He carried her safely in his memory. He carried her little golden sandals close to his heart; vividly, safely, and forever he would remember.

And Titu, his father, who wanted for his son what he himself could never have. Where was he now? the boy wondered; but he knew that, wherever Titu was, his thoughts were for his son.

Cusi had no questions. He had only thoughts, but

Title: "Nickelodeon-Are You Afraid of the Dark?: The Tale of the Souvenir Shop"

Author: Alice Eve Cohen

Publisher: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.8

First passage:

The blistered, parched land raced backward outside the car window. It was a dangerously hot and dry summer. Julianna could see the heat radiating from the pavement. When she squinted her eyes she could see a mirage of water on the sizzling highways. Canyons and mountains whizzed by. Spending a month on a car trip with her family was not her idea of a perfect vacation, and her only escape from such close quarters was science fiction. Julianna pressed her nose to the glass and gazed at the prehistoric-looking landscape, conjuring up a story.

The pterodactyl swooped down, catching her

Second passage:

Julianna, feeling hopeless, wanted desperately to see her sister, to reassure her somehow. She focused her vision to the side as far as she could, but all she could see was Emily's frozen right hand tangled in her hair, her rigid fingers thrown back in the instant of fear. I have to get us out of here. Emily is depending on me. Then Julianna heard a human voice and she trained her eyes to look across the room. At the far end of the tremendous room she saw the girl motioning to her. Straining on her leash, Wendy waved to

Third passage:

The car drove off into the distance and disappeared. The landscape they left behind stood silent and still. The scorched, blackened earth and smoking embers were the only reminder of what once was. A few puffs of smoke seeped out of the charred ground.

Then the earth shivered slightly where the entrance to the cave used to be. The ground trembled and heaved, the way a blanket moves when the sleeper beneath it turns over. The flat, hardened lava cracked and opened up like a canyon. Stones tumbled into the new gorge. A hand... a giant hand reached over the

Title: "A Bear Called Paddington"

Author: Michael Bond

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.7

First passage:

Mr. and Mrs. Brown first met Paddington on a railway platform. In fact, that was how he came to have such an unusual name for a bear, for Paddington was the name of the station.

The Browns were there to meet their daughter Judy, who was coming home from school for the holidays. It was a warm summer day and the station was crowded with people on their way to the seaside. Trains were whistling, taxis hooting, porters rushing and shouting at one another, and altogether there was so much noise that Mr. Brown, who saw him first, had to

Second passage:

Paddington sat up and looked around to see where he was. He felt much better now. Somewhat to his astonishment, he found he was sitting in a small room in the middle of which was a great pile of tins and basins and bowls. He rubbed his eyes and stared, round-eyed, at the sight.

Behind him there was a wall with a door in it, and in front of him there was a large window. On the other side of the window there was a large crowd of people pushing one another and pointing in his direction. Paddington decided with

Third passage:

Among Paddington's many presents was a conjuring outfit from Mr. and Mrs. Brown. It was a very expensive one from Barkridges. It had a special magic table, a large mystery box which made things disappear if you followed the instructions properly, a magic wand and several packs of cards. Paddington emptied them all over the floor and settled down in the middle to read the book of instructions.

He sat there for a long time, studying the pictures and diagrams, reading everything twice to make sure. Every now and then he absent-mindedly dipped a paw into his marmalade pot, and

Title: "Lunchroom: Night of a Thousand Pizzas"

Author: Ann Hodgeman

Publisher: The Berkley Publishing Group

Publisher's R.L.: 5.7

First passage:

Mr. Haypence didn't hear it, though. He adjusted his glasses and smiled graciously out at the students assembled in the Hollis lunchroom as if he was waiting for something. Applause maybe? Bonnie wondered. Whatever it was, it didn't happen.

The first day of school at Hollis Elementary always meant two things: an all-school assembly in the morning, and pizza for lunch. At the assembly, everyone - from the tiny, scared kindergartners to the big, bored sixth-graders - gathered to listen to Mr. Haypence describe all the wonderful changes that had taken place in the school over the summer and the wonderful plans

Second passage:

The lunch ladies picked up their oven mitts and stood attention. The oven doors popped open. And the smell of school pizza - a smell somewhere between wet leather and burning rubber - filled the air.

As Bonnie picked up her tray and got into line, she got a good look at the new oven. It looked big enough to have baked a few school buses along with the revolving racks of pizzas that the lunch ladies were pulling out and slathering with tomato sauce and cheese.

Bonnie blinked. The lunch ladies looked awfully busy. They kept pulling out and slathering. And

Third passage:

Most of the kids in Mrs. Doubleday's class were all working in one corner of the lunchroom. Bonnie's pizza was done so quickly that she decided to spend the rest of the half-hour watching her classmates work on theirs.

Except for Bob. He was working on his pizza across the room, and whenever Bonnie caught his eye he flung himself around to shield his pizza from her view. Bonnie could hardly believe he was acting like such a baby. *How could I tell what's in his stupid pizza from across the room anyway?* The first pizza she noticed was Rocky

Title: "The Enormous Egg"
 Author: Oliver Butterworth
 Publisher: Dell Publishing Co., Inc.
 Publisher's R.L.: 5.7

First passage:

My name is Nate Twitchell, but I can't help that. It's a kind of a funny name, but I've had it for twelve years, and I'm pretty much used to it by now. And I guess a lot of other folks have got used to it too, after the thing that happened up here in Freedom, New Hampshire. It's just a little town, with a few houses all along one street, and a store and a church, and not much else. Oh yes, and a school. I almost forgot that. We're only about three miles from the Maine state line,

Second passage

We turned off the radio and went back to answering the telephone. It sounded funny to hear our own name coming right over the radio, just as if it was some other family that we'd never heard of. After the new broadcast the telephone calls began coming thick and fast, and Cynthia really had her hands full. She was having fun, though, and I had to wipe dishes in her place, so I didn't pity her too much. There were calls from all over the place. There was one from Boothbay, and another from Prouts Neck, wherever that is, and

Third passage

The excitement died down pretty fast, and the next day I went to school, and I had to study subjects and predicates and fractions just as if I'd never been away at all. And now one day goes along pretty much like another, and there's not much excitement. There's plenty to do, though, what with laying in the stovewood for the winter, and taking care of the goat and chickens. It gets dark out by supertime now, and we sit around the stove evenings, and the warmth feels good.

Once a week, though, a letter comes from Dr. Ziemer down

Title: "Take to the Sky"

Author: Laurie Lawlor

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.6

First passage:

Moe watched, speechless. She stood at the edge of the boisterous Independence Day crowd gathered in Norman Dubie's baked, stubbled field and waited. Was Art Taylor really going to skyjump the way the posters in town had promised? Sweat trickled down Moe's forehead and eyebrows. Her scalp and bright red hair felt hot enough to burst into flames. She kept her eyes welded to the five strong men who struggled to hold the ropes securing the bucking silk balloon that was being inflated with smoke and air from an oil fire burning in a small cart.

Confident as an angel,

Second passage:

Moe and Otto followed the railroad track into the forest outside town. The air smelled of pine. In the shadows the air wasn't as hot. Mosquitoes buzzed. Birds sang in the deep, cool shadows, and every once in a while, Moe heard a quick dash and rustle in the underbrush. Was it a deer, raccoon - or wolf? She walked faster along the railroad ties.

Through the trees she saw the railroad bridge at Big Bend, the place where the tracks crossed Devil's Tooth Ravine. The one-track bridge made of hewn timber stretched two hundred feet across a gorge nearly fifty

Third passage:

Moe nodded. Somewhere beyond Norman Dubie's hayfield and fairgrounds, a series of firecrackers exploded one after the other. The speeches must have ended, because a roar went up that sounded like distant applause and cheering. Before she lost her nerve, Moe knew she must take to the sky.

She thought of Grace, the hawk's wings outstretched, soaring. Gripping the umbrella handle tightly with both hands, she stood at the roof ridge and started running. When she reached the edge, she tucked her feet under her. Solid ground - gone! The umbrella bucked, filled with wind, and lifted her in a sunward

Title: "The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle"

Author: Hugh Lofting

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.6

First passage:

My name is Tommy Stubbins, son of Jacob Stubbins, the cobbler of Puddleby-on-the-Marsh; I was nine and a half years old. At that time Puddleby was only quite a small town. A river ran through the middle of it, and over this river there was a very old stone bridge called Kingsbridge, which led you from the marketplace on one side to the churchyard on the other.

Sailing ships came up this river from the sea and anchored near the bridge. I used to go down and watch the sailors unloading the ships upon the river wall. The sailors sang

Second passage:

Indeed he was a terrible person, this Ben Butcher. You'd think that anyone after being told he wasn't wanted would have had the decency to keep quiet. But not Ben Butcher. He kept going around the deck pointing out all the things we had wrong. According to him, there wasn't a thing right on the whole ship. The anchor was hitched up wrong; the hatches weren't fastened down properly; the sails were put on back to front; all our knots were the wrong kind of knots.

At last the Doctor told him to stop talking and go downstairs. He refused -

Third passage:

Our greatest difficulty was getting enough light to see by. In the lower waters it was very dim. On the third day we passed a band of fire eels, a sort of large marine glowworm, and the Doctor asked the snail to get them to come with us for a way. This they did, swimming alongside, and their light was very helpful, though not brilliant.

How our giant shellfish found his way across that vast and gloomy world was a great puzzle to us. John Dolittle asked him by what means he navigated - how he knew he was on the

Title: "Trouble River"

Author: Betsy Byars

Publisher: Penguin Books USA, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.6

First passage:

Dewey rolled over and put his face beside the dog's. Half asleep, the dog roused long enough to lick the boy's cheek. Dewey closed his eyes and thought of Hunter City with its buildings and tents. He thought of how it was to walk down the street and look in the tents and see men eating on long plank tables or gambling, of the sounds of the hurdy-gurdies and the laughter. He thought of walking among the canvas-covered wagons grouped by the river and talking to the emigrants, or standing in the back of the store and watching a checker

Second passage

They drew closer, and Dewey knew they were going to hit. Rushing forward, bracing one foot on the low split log, he reached out with the oar to break the impact. Grandma sat forward in her chair to watch the boy's skillful maneuver that would send them around the bank and on down the river.

The oar jammed into the soft mud, then the other end punched hard into Dewey's chest, knocking him backward. Grandma, who was already leaning forward, was almost thrown out of her chair.

She straightened quickly and looked at Dewey from beneath her bonnet, her brows

Third passage

He did not answer, for both of them knew. Dewey watched wide-eyed as the little raft, unbelievably frail in the tempestuous water, swept around the bend in the river. The water rippled sideways like the flank of a giant horse trying to rid itself of a fly. Then Dewey gasped, and he heard his grandma scream.

There, stretching below them, were the rapids. Through a treacherous crack in the bluffs - it was as if the bluffs had been pulled apart like a ripe fruit - the water ran, dashing against rocks, throwing spray high into the air. It slipped over wide, even

Title: "Johnny Tremain"

Author: Esther Forbes

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.5

First passage:

On rocky islands gulls woke. Time to be about their business. Silently they floated in on the town, but when their icy eyes sighted the first dead fish, first bits of garbage about the ships and wharves, they began to scream and quarrel.

The cocks in Boston back yards had long before cried the coming of day. Now the hens were also awake, scratching, clucking, laying eggs.

Cats in malt houses, granaries, ship holds, mansions and hovels caught a last mouse, settled down to wash their fur and sleep. Cats did not work by day.

In stables horses shook their

Second passage:

Johnny had saved Paul Revere for the last because he lived at North Square and, being a Sunday, he knew that Cilla and Isannah would be waiting for him by the town pump. Guiltily he remembered he had not bothered to meet them last Thursday, nor the Sunday before, nor the Thursday before that.

He glanced about. The girls were not there, and secretly he was relieved. He went on to Mr. Revere's. The silversmith was busy drawing a political cartoon concerning tea and tyranny. He did not draw well - not the way he made silver. As he drew, his

Third passage:

He could smell turned earth and gummy buds. And sweet wood somewhere burning. His nostrils trembled. Almost could they recapture the gunpowder of yesterday. So fair a day now drawing to its close. Green with spring, dreaming of the future yet wet with blood.

This was his land and these his people.

The cow that lowed, the man who milked, the chickens that came running and the woman who called them, the fragrance streaming from the plowed land and the plowman. These he possessed. The skillful hands of the unseen gunsmith were his hands. The old woman throwing stones at

Title: "World of Adventure: Grizzly"

Author: Gary Paulson

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.5

First passage:

Radar's ears went up. The growling changed to a high, piercing bark. She scratched wildly at the windowpane, then flipped around and tore out the bedroom door.

Justin was right behind her. He grabbed his uncle Mack's rifle from the rack above the living room fireplace, took a flashlight from the mantel, and yanked open the front door.

A bitter blast of cold Montana spring wind slammed into his body. It felt like a solid wall of ice and reminded him that he was barefoot and wearing only the lower half of his long johns.

Radar bounded into the darkness.

Second passage:

He grabbed his bedroll and food pack and moved to the gate. The wind was worse today, whistling and howling through the trees. Justin set his jaw. It didn't matter how cold it became. Nothing would keep him from finding that bear.

The trail was old now, but it was all he had to go on. Uncle Mack had told him that bears usually followed a pattern when they traveled. If you searched and kept circling, sooner or later you would find fresh tracks.

Radar's barks of protest grew fainter as Justin strode quickly down the path. He'd decided not

Third passage:

Justin stood up to run. But the bear didn't move. Her eyes were closed, and blood trickled from the corner of her mouth.

He should have been glad that at last the great bear was dead. But he wasn't. This was the killer that had murdered Blue and the other sheep. This grizzly had put Mr. Miller out of business and had tried more than once to kill Justin too.

But Justin couldn't bring himself to be happy. The bear had been smart. And if it hadn't been for her pulling him out, He'd probably still be trapped under the

Title: "The Paxton Cheerleaders - Go For it Patti!"

Author: Katy Hall

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.5

First passage:

My mom would check out the cheering situation. She had been a big cheerleading star at the University of Texas - she was co-captain of the squad. The other co-captain was her identical twin sister, Peggy. The University of Texas is where my mom met my dad, too - Bill Richardson, the team's star quarterback.

We've got a photo album labeled *Wild Bill* with a big 23 on the cover, which was the number on my dad's football jersey when he played for U.T. and for the five years he played for the Dallas Cowboys. It's full of pictures of what my

Second passage:

And so our voice projection workshop began. After we breathed for a while, Mrs. Copeland asked us to imagine that we had a string pulling up on our breastbones.

As we tried to get our voices deeper and deeper, I thought about how different Cassie's mother was from mine. My mom turned cartwheels! But Mrs. Copeland seemed sort of distant and formal. I wondered if she was always like this with Cassie. Or rather, Cassandra.

After a while Mrs. Copeland asked to work with Lauren alone. Cassie and Tara and I went into the living room, and Mrs. Copeland closed

Third passage:

We went into action. Arms out in a T-motion, sharp and crisp. Back to half-T. Circle around. On the word *best!* Tara and I lunged forward, and Lauren jumped up on our thighs. After she hopped down, we moved quickly into formation for ripple jump, the words of the cheer acting as our count. On the word *you* Tara jumped up, spread her legs, and so very close to touching her toes! Cassie went next, then me, and on *test!* Lauren finished up with a flying toe-touch jump that brought gasps even from the stone-faced judges. As we stood there

Title: "My Babysitter Bites Again"

Author: Ann Hodgman

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.4

First passage:

I sighed. Kelly and I had been sitting on the beach for an hour. The Atlantic Ocean was glistening blue, the air was warm and crisp at the same time, the breeze smelled of salt and sunscreen. It was a beautiful beach day - and I had to spend it listening to Kelly talk about her tiny allowance.

Actually, Kelly Pitts's allowance is twice the size of mine. No way is she starving. And, actually, I don't call her Kelly - I call her Pittsy. She doesn't know that, of course, and I try not to let it slip out.

My name

Second passage:

As if a string somewhere in heaven had been pulled, the clouds slid back and a shaft of sunlight streamed down toward us. For the moment it brightened everything. The water in the fountain turned a sparkling blue. The dew on the damp grass gleamed like crystal. A bird in the hedge started to chirp cheerfully.

And Vaughn had another temper tantrum.

Not temper, exactly. Anyone could see that the sun was making him terribly uncomfortable. I've told you about his screaming already, but let me just say that he was screaming worse than ever now. He rubbed his eyes

Third passage:

An especially fat sea gull labored through the air toward the boat. I tossed him some popcorn, but he missed. Squawking with frustration, he flapped down toward the water, where the popcorn was now floating.

I leaned over the railing to watch his progress. He flew clumsily down to the water, dipped down to grab some popcorn in his beak, and struggled away with it.

There was my reflection, staring up at me. I gave myself a cheery wave, and my reflection waved back at me.

Who was that standing next to my reflection?

A tall, dark, motionless figure with

Title: "One-Man Team"
 Author: Dean Hughes
 Publisher: Random House, Inc.
 Publisher's R.L.: 5.4

First passage:

Aaron had moved into town - Greenwood, Oregon - only a week before. He had registered for eighth grade at the middle school the next morning. But it was already January, and he had known that the basketball team was set for the season. So at the time, he had decided not to say anything to the coach. He figured he would just play some ball in gym class.

Aaron moved a lot - usually once or twice a year. His father supervised building for a big construction company, and his family moved each time a new project started. The company was putting

Second passage:

Aaron figured he better not take another shot for a while - at least nothing that long.

The Panthers hurried the ball up the court. The Timber Wolves hustled back, however, so the Panthers set up their half-court offense and tried to work for a good shot. But the center got called for a three-second violation, and the Timber Wolves were back in business.

The Panthers were putting some full-court pressure on Phil now. He passed off to Shawn and then took a pass back. The two of them got the ball up the court without much trouble.

The Panthers were

Third passage:

In the fourth quarter, after Aaron had sat down for a while and Chris and some of the other subs had gotten some playing time, he came back into the game. The lead had dropped a little, but the Timber Wolves were still safely ahead, 48-37.

When Aaron came down with a long rebound near the foul line, he spun and took off for his own basket. A defender came with him, and both ran hard to the hoop.

Aaron loved this. He loved to take the guy all the way, use one of his tricky lay-ups, and pick up

Title: "Anastasia at your Service"

Author: Lois Lowry

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.4

First passage:

Anastasia loved suppertime. Especially when they has lasagna, as they did tonight. Her mother was the best lasagna-maker in the whole world. If ever there were a National Lasagna Bake-Off Contest, her mother would win, she was quite certain.

She had told her mother that once. But her mother had made a terrible face, with her eyes crossed and her tongue sticking out. Apparently her mother didn't want to win a National Lasagna Bake-Off Contest. Anastasia could understand that. Probably the prize would be an apron or something.

Even when they didn't have lasagna, Anastasia loved suppertime, because the whole

Second passage:

Inside, Anastasia could see that the house was very proper, very pretty. Furniture that matched, and no dust. Her own house was not as pretty but much more interesting, and messier.

But Daphne's room was different. The walls were painted black, and there was huge obscene poster of two dogs tacked up between the windows. There were clothes all over the floor; Anastasia recognized the yellow and white dress that Daphne had worn to her grandmother's luncheon lying in a pile with sweaters and jeans and underwear. On the unmade bed was a brand-new, expensive doll, with its clothes removed,

Third passage:

Anastasia woke the next morning with the sense that she had had a bad dream. Then she remembered. It hadn't been a bad dream at all. It had been real.

The mayor had sputtered and glowered and sought out Mrs. Bellingham to ask who this obnoxious child was. And it was Daphne.

Mrs. Bellingham had demanded an explanation from Daphne, who had excused herself and run to the powder room to throw up. That was when Anastasia discovered her there and heard what happened.

They had talked briefly about the possibility of running away together, maybe joining a circus or

Title: "Horse Crazy: Surprise, Surprise!"

Author: Virginia Vail

Publisher: Troll Associates

Publisher's R.L.: 5.3

First passage:

Libby sprayed Emily, then Emily sprayed Libby before they went further into the woods, paying special attention to their ankles and shins to avoid a tick attack. As they approached, all the horses raised their heads and pricked their ears forward glad of human company. Joker tossed his head and whickered softly as he always did whenever he hadn't seen Emily for a while, and Emily's heart beat faster as it always did when she hadn't seen Joker for a while. The big palomino was the most beautiful, most completely wonderful horse she had ever seen in her whole life.

Second passage:

The next morning, Emily woke up before any of the Fillies, as she always did. She quietly put on her T-shirt, jeans, and boots. She loved to visit Joker all by herself in the pasture where the horses spent the night – it was so peaceful there, and Emily enjoyed being the only human being in a world of horses. As she tiptoed across the cabin floor, she paused for a moment by Judy's bunk, wondering if she should ask her friend to come with her.

Once outside, Emily took a deep breath of the fresh, cool air and looked up

Third passage:

Emily couldn't wait to tell Judy everything Caro had said, but somehow there just wasn't time. Emily had barely finished grooming Joker and cleaning out his stall when it was time for her riding class. After lunch, during rest period, Penny and Dru challenged Judy to a game of Monopoly, and Emily had to go back to the stable and clean Joker's tack. Then Libby, Lynda, and Caro asked Judy to watch the advanced riding class, and after that was the video, then chores, and supper, and games in the activity room. Whatever was going on, Judy was always busy,

Title: "Charlie Pippin"
 Author: Candy Dawson Boyd
 Publisher: Penguin Books USA, Inc.
 Publisher's R.L.: 5.3

First passage:

By the time the school buzzer rang, Charlie's gray metal change box bulged with coins. Quickly she locked the box, shoving it, along with her supplies, into a battered briefcase. She swung a purple bookbag over her right shoulder, and she ran. Being late was only one of the sins you could commit in Mrs. Hayamoto's sixth-grade room.

Charlie dodged past clusters of students. Starting a new school year with a new teacher unnerved her. She knew that some teachers liked her, and some just didn't. Her big sister, Sienna, on the other hand, always got teachers who adored her.

Second passage:

By the first week in October, orange and black streamers and skeletons decorated Berkley store windows. Since the peace march, Charlie had completed four interviews at school: two with first-graders, one with a second-grader, and one with a third-grader. With the additional practice, her questions improved. She was learning to listen.

At the same time, Charlie was learning to see better, too. But even if she'd been oblivious, she would have noticed that Sienna had been coming home late for over a week. She didn't even run with Daddy anymore. What was going on?

Finally, during recess and lunch one

Third passage:

Late that night Charlie woke up starving. A box of cranes and doves rested on her desk next to a small stack of handpainted cards. She was getting a late start, with Christmas only a week and a half away. She had folded and painted for hours, skipping dinner.

Charlie climbed out of bed. Her robe was flung on the chair right below the third-place ribbon she'd Scotch-taped to her bookshelf.

Sienna's snores were gurgly from the cold. Charlie felt under her bed for her slippers. Her hand brushed against the change box and the briefcase. The rain had stopped.

Title: "Everyone Else's Parents Said Yes"

Author: Paula Danzinger

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.3

First passage:

Mark Ellison always thinks it isn't fair when he loses.

Then Patrick Ryan is out. He walks away, making jokes as if he doesn't care, but he does. Patrick Ryan plays to win.

Soon it is down to Joshua against Tyler White.

Tyler throws the ball, and throws it at Joshua's head, but Joshua ducks, grabs the ball, and throws it at Tyler, hitting him on the rear end.

Everyone cheers and gives high fives to Joshua.

Heads you lose, tails I win, thinks Matthew as the bell rings, signaling back-to-class time.

Usually Matthew hates that bell, but not today.

Second passage:

Tyler stares back, but he's the first one to blink and look away.

Matthew smiles for the first time since he's gotten into the classroom and seen what's on his desk.

All of the boys in the class are crowding around his desk.

All of the girls are standing by the aquarium, talking to each other and looking his way.

Some of the girls are giggling.

Others are glaring.

Vanessa Singer looks very proud of herself.

Matthew looks around the classroom and tries to figure out what to do next.

The girls keep glaring and giggling.

Matthew is in deep

Third passage:

All the boys have finally left after the sleep-over.

Two barfed.

All of them watched as Danny and Amanda came back from their date.

All of them made kissing sounds with their lips on their hands when Danny started to kiss Amanda as they stood on the porch.

Amanda threatened to put all of them in the microwave, piece by piece, and then she begged to be sent away to boarding school or to have Matthew sent to reform school.

Matthew said it was not his fault.

Amanda disagreed.

The boys, at breakfast, ate ninety-four pancakes, spilled the syrup all

Title: "The Cousins' Club: Everything Stinks"

Author: Patricia Hermes

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.2

First passage:

I couldn't believe she'd be this unfair. How could she do this to me? My own mother?

I took a deep breath and looked across the kitchen at Amy, my twin. She seems to know, a whole lot better than me, how to get what she wants from Mom without a big battle.

Amy was looking at me now, shaking her head the tiniest bit, sending me a message. Amy is the nicest – and sometimes weirdest – person I know. And believe me, with our huge family of aunts and uncles and cousins, I know some truly weird people. But if

Second passage:

They hadn't noticed. Everyone had just come off the ice and were turning in their skates and all, so we hadn't even been missed. Still, for the rest of that afternoon, I was very quiet, and Meghann was too. I don't know what she was thinking, but I was afraid that if I said anything, it would come out – what had happened. So it wasn't until we were back home, and the four of us – Meghann and Marcie and Amy and me – were all piled on my bed that Meghann and I told them about it.

Only problem was, when

Third passage:

I plopped down on the bed, and Amy went straight for her lizard cage.

I watched her, thinking. So much had happened in just one week. I mean, I thought I knew a lot about growing up now, what it was and what it wasn't. What was important and what wasn't.

Like, I still didn't know what to do about boys and school and friends. And maybe I was growing up faster than Amy ... although I wasn't so sure about that anymore. But what I did know was this: I knew what was important. I knew what made a family

Title: "All But Alice"

Author: Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.2

First passage:

Elizabeth Price, across the street, has a room with twin beds, with white eyelet bedspreads on each, a little dressing table and stool, a lamp with a white eyelet ruffle for a shade, and a bulletin board covered with photos of Elizabeth in her ballet costume, her tap shoes and pants, her gymnastic leotards, and her Camp Fire Girl uniform, which isn't too surprising, since there's a huge photograph over the couch in their living room of Elizabeth in her first communion dress.

Pamela Jones, down the next block, has pictures of movie stars and singers on hers. She also

Second passage

I've never liked shopping with other people, to tell the truth, because I like to go home after I find what I want. When we shopped together, Pamela tried on earrings while the rest of us watched. Then Jill tried on earrings. It took forever. If the other girls were going to buy a pair each week, I would too, but I wondered if I could do this for the next two years of junior high school. One pair of earrings a week for one hundred and four weeks meant one hundred and four pairs of earrings. I should have

Third passage

You know what Patrick? He reached over, grabbed my shoulders, and kissed me on the mouth. In front of the other boys at the back. It wasn't a kiss in the moonlight with our snow-covered eyelashes beating time with our hearts; it was a kiss in the school bus with smell and taste of orange juice on Patrick's lips.

Brian started yelling like a baboon and the boys all stomped their feet on the floor, which made all the kids in front turn around. And you know what happened next? Patrick kissed me again. When a seventh-grade boy can't think

Title: "The World's Worst Fairy Godmother"

Author: Bruce Coville

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.2

First passage:

Following Mr. Peters and Edna through a crack in the door, Maybelle found herself standing at the back of a schoolroom. Standing at the front of the room was a very harried-looking teacher.

About twenty children sat on hard wooden benches, working on slates. For about two minutes everyone was very quiet. Then a boy near the front of the room took a large spider from his pocket.

Maybelle giggled when she realized that the spider was made of black paper.

Edna poked her in the ribs.

Using a string attached to one end, the boy dangled the spider over

Second passage:

While Zozmagog was in his cave, contemplating his revenge, Maybelle was rushing about gathering the ingredients she needed for her apple. Some of the things she had on hand already: the first sunbeam of a spring day, which she had been saving in a bottle for just such an occasion; the song of a meadowlark, a beautiful trill that she had caught in a handkerchief two summers earlier; the smell of bread just coming out of the oven, something that she carried with her always.

But the look of moonlight on still water, which was very hard to keep, she

Third passage:

The commotion brought out Ludwig, who was soon infected as well. Helga showed up a moment later – and a moment after that, she was screaming and hitting too.

Before long there was a battle going on at the edge of town unlike anything anyone had ever seen. Every kid in Grindersnog had been attracted by the shouts and screams. Within seconds of reaching the fight, each newcomer was infected by the spell. Children who had been rambunctious but basically decent all their lives were screeching, swearing, and throwing punches left and right.

It was about then that Edna and Zozmagog

Title: "The Return of the Plant That Ate Dirty Socks"

Author: Nancy McArthur

Publisher: The Hearst Corporation

Publisher's R.L.: 5.1

First passage:

He tried to think of excuses to keep Jason from coming over. It was a good thing he lived far enough away on the other side of town so he couldn't just walk over any time he felt like it. When Jason had arranged for his uncle to drive the plants to the science fair in a limo, he'd sneakily sort of gotten Michael to promise him some seed even though Michael had been sure there weren't going to be any.

Now there were hundreds of seeds, and he had to make sure Jason did not find out.

But of

Second passage:

Dad explained that when he got back to the RV Mom was not there. He went around to neighboring RV's to ask if anyone had seen her. When he realized he'd wasted twenty minutes looking, he walked down the campground yelling her name. People looked at him strangely, but Mom heard him and came out of an RV where she'd been visiting.

It was beginning to get dark, so they decided to try to borrow a pickup truck. That way they could drive the plants back quicker than it would take to roll them in the dark. Finding someone willing

Third passage:

At Chad's and Jason's and thirty-six other kids' homes around town, new little plants were peeking up, about two inches high.

Somewhere near the Everglades six seeds in six pots were sending little shoots out, still under the dirt, in the Sparks family's RV.

There were also tiny plants sprouting unnoticed where Fluffy had shed pods at both their Florida campsites, outside Addie's house and in the swamp.

In Grandma's bathroom, her plant's tiny vines were trying to pick up a washcloth.

As Michael and Norman snoozed peacefully, Stanley reached out a vine to grab the bedpost at the end

Title: "Beethoven's Cat"

Author: Elisabeth McHugh

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.1

First passage:

It all began one evening in November.

As was often the case after dinner, the whole Carter family was assembled in the living room. Everybody was busy doing his or her own thing: Mr. C. was at his desk, working on his dissertation on Beethoven; B.C., the baby, was on the floor on a blanket, contentedly chewing on his rubber alligator; Mrs. C. was, for the third time that week, trying to fix the zipper on Steve's coat. Stevie himself was stretched out on the floor, making weird noises while reading a comic book. His older sister, Cilla, was draped

Second passage

Right then, even the prospect of being taken to the vet failed to make an impression on me. I felt dizzy and light-headed, and the ringing in my ears appeared to be getting worse.

As Josh had pointed out a couple of days ago, it probably had been the vibrations from the piano that had made Beethoven gradually lose his hearing. Now it was my turn. Because of my dedication to the arts, I had jeopardized my health. I wondered how long it would be before I was totally deaf. Weeks? Months? At the moment I didn't rally care. All

Third passage

As soon as we came home, Cilla carried me up to her room. Carefully she put me down in the basket on top of the dresser. Then she tucked the cat blanket around me. Within a matter of seconds I was fast asleep.

When I opened my eyes the next morning, I felt like a new person. It was amazing what a good night's sleep could do. Still without stirring, I looked out the window. It was snowing again, large, fluffy flakes that were falling softly to the ground.

I suddenly became aware of the silence in the house. Usually

Title: "The Diamond War"

Author: Zilpha Keatley Snyder

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.1

First passage:

It was early on a Saturday morning and light was just beginning to slant across the cul-de-sac known as Castle Court. Long shadows reached out from each of the seven houses, and a damp fog still drifted under the tall trees that grew on the mysterious vacant lot. In the misty morning light the great jagged crag on the hill above the cul-de-sac looked, more than ever, like an old ruined castle.

The sun was just clearing the hilltops when a back door slammed open at number three Castle Court. Number three was a big new Spanish-style house with a

Second passage:

While Athena was still on her way across Castle Court the back door of the Brockhurst house slammed open and Bucky shot out. He skidded to a stop, dropped down into a starting-block crouch, and kicked off into an all-out run – hundred-yard-dash practice.

At the low hedge between his house and Carlos's he practiced his hurdle-jumping technique. After he cleared the hedge he zigged and zagged clear around the Garcia's swimming pool carrying an imaginary football and skillfully avoiding half a dozen imaginary tacklers. As he zigged past a water-polo ball he grabbed it up and dribbled it across the .

Third passage:

Athena gasped. She stared at Bucky and then at Prince. Then she threw herself on the ground and started to scream louder than ever.

At four o'clock that afternoon Ari Pappas sat on the fence at one end of Prince's pasture and wrote in his notebook. He had a lot to write about. He wanted to get the whole thing down from beginning to end – especially the part about what Mr. A. had done when Bucky Brockhurst shot off his mouth about Prince going to the dog food factory.

What Mr. A. had done was to pick Bucky up by

Title: "Five Children and It"

Author: E. Nesbit

Publisher: Scholastic Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.0

First passage:

Everyone got its legs kicked or its feet trodden on in the scramble to get out of the carriage that very minute, but no one seemed to mind. Mother, curiously enough, was in no hurry to get out, and even when she had come down slowly and by the step, and with no jump at all, she seemed to wish to see the boxes carried in, and even to pay the driver, instead of joining in that first glorious rush round the garden and the orchard and the thorny, thistly, briery, brambly wilderness beyond the broken gate and the dry

Second passage:

I do not wish to describe the picnic party on the top of the tower. You can imagine well enough what it is like to carve a chicken and a tongue with a knife that has only one blade – and that snapped off short about halfway down. But it was done. Eating with your fingers is greasy and difficult – and paper dishes soon get to look very spotty and horrid. But one thing you can't imagine, and this is how soda water behaves when you try to drink it straight out of a siphon – especially a quite full one.

Third passage:

The Indians had formed a ring round the children and now sat on the ground gazing at their captives. There was a threatening silence.

Then slowly, by twos and threes, the Indians who had gone to look for firewood came back, and they came back empty-handed. They had not been able to find a single stick of wood for a fire! No one ever can, as a matter of fact, in that part of Kent.

The children drew a deep breath of relief, but it ended in a moan of terror. For bright knives were being brandished all about them.

Title: "Frank and Stein and Me"

Author: Kin Platt

Publisher: Scholastic Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.0

First passage:

I'm Jack Hook, as in hook shot. You guessed it. I'm always on a basketball high. It's my game, my life, and I live with the ball.

My old man was a pretty good shooter, real sharp from the foul line. He got me into the game early. He took me to the Forum when I was little to see Wilt and Earl the Pearl. Then later it was Jerry-Mr. Clutch, then Kareem, the wild Harlem Globetrotters and Meadowlark Lemon. Then it was Ice Bird, and now Magic Johnson.

I dribble my ball as soon as I'm off from school

Second passage:

The eerie wail stopped so suddenly, I began to think I hadn't heard it at all. Maybe it's only your imagination, I told myself. You're letting yourself get all spooked out.

But I also knew my hearing was always pretty good. If I had heard something, it was there. It didn't have to be a wolf. Why would Dr. Stein keep a wolf around. It could have been a dog, I told myself. Dogs sound like that.

That takes care of those bones in the room, too, I told myself. Dogs eat bones.

That kind of cool thinking made me

Third passage:

I looked around. There were signs in French, but I couldn't read them. Dr. Stein read them to us. I paid attention so that I could tell the kid sister about it.

Alexandre Gustave Eiffel built it. It took exactly two years, two months, and two days, from January 26, 1887 to March 31, 1889.

It was 1,050 feet high. It weighed 7,000 tons and had 15,000 pieces of welded metal. It was the highest building in the world until 1929, when they built the Chrysler Building in New York.

Alexandre Eiffel himself walked to the top. There were only

Title: "Ramona the Pest"

Author: Beverly Cleary

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 5.0

First passage:

As Ramona sat waiting for her present she watched the other children being introduced to Miss Binney by their mothers. She found two members of the morning kindergarten especially interesting. One was a boy named Davey, who was small, thin, and eager. He was the only boy in the class in short pants, and Ramona liked him at once. She liked him so much she decided she would like to kiss him.

The other interesting person was a big girl named Susan. Susan's hair looked like the hair on the girls in the pictures if the old-fashioned stories Beezus liked

Second passage:

The intersection by the school was unusually quiet that morning, because rain had halted construction on the new market. Ramona was so downhearted that she did not even tease Henry Huggins when he led her across the street. The kindergarten playground, as she had expected, was swarming with boys and girls in raincoats, most of them too big, and boots, most of them new. The girls wore various sorts of raincoats and red or white boots – all except Susan, who carried her new white boots so she would not get them muddy. The boys looked alike because they all wore

Third passage:

A truant officer, Ramona decided, must be something like the dog catcher who sometimes came to Glenwood School when there were too many dogs on the playground. He tried to lasso the dogs, and once when he did manage to catch an elderly overweight Bassett hound, he shut the dog in the back of his truck and drove away with it. Ramona did not want any truant officer to catch her and drive away with her, so she put her lopsided, two-wheeled tricycle into the garage and went into the house and stayed there, looking out from behind the curtains

Title: "Chocolate Fever"

Author: Robert Kimmel Smith

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.9

First passage:

There are some people who say that Henry Green wasn't really born, but was hatched, fully grown, from a chocolate bean.

Can you believe that?

Anyway, this particular Henry Green we are speaking of was really born – not hatched – and had a wonderful mom and dad in the bargain. His father was tall and lean and wore eyeglasses, except when he was sleeping or in the shower. Mama Green, whose name was Enid, was a short, slim woman with blue-gray eyes and a tiny mouth that always seemed to be on the verge of a smile.

They all lived in

Second passage:

Sick at heart, Henry pushed himself to run faster. His head hurt. His side hurt. His legs hurt. But he kept running.

His lungs hurt. His eyes hurt. Even his hair began to hurt. But Henry kept running.

At last he could run no more. He was finished. Done. He had to rest, and to rest he had to hide. Without thinking about it. Henry ran down a large grassy alley that lay between two white houses. At the end of the alley was a large garage with one door partly open. Henry sneaked in and looked around. There was

Third passage:

Henry was into his pancakes now, and they were quickly disappearing. The syrup was good and mapley, the pancakes had a delicious wheat flavor, and washed down with cold milk it was extra good. But still, something was missing. Some taste. Some kind of spark that would make it even better.

There was a small can of cinnamon on the table which Elizabeth sometimes used on her toast. Henry wondered how cinnamon would taste on what was left of his pancakes. He reached out for the canister and sprinkled just a little bit of cinnamon on his plate. Then he

Title: "The Party Line: Allie's Wild Surprise"

Author: Carrie Austen

Publisher: The Berkely Publishing Group

Publisher's R.L.: 4.9

First passage:

I'll never forget it because that was the day my best friend, Becky Bartlett, got her greatest idea ever – to start our own business throwing parties for people.

Actually, it happened by accident; it's just that Becky knew how to take advantage of the situation. See, there are four partners – me, Becky, Julie Berger, and Rosie Torres – but none of us had actually planned on starting a party business. That's how things are sometimes. If you're in the right place at the right time, amazing things can happen.

The Friday before, I had to pick up my little brother Mouse

Second passage:

The rest of the day sped by quickly. I could hardly wait until school ended so we could get started on our party shopping. That afternoon we zipped through the supermarket and made a checklist: napkins, paper plates, plastic cups. We moved to another aisle and did the same for soda and candy.

We all had to get home to study, and Rosie had two hours of piano practice as well, so I offered to add up the costs on my own. Since everyone knows I'm pretty lame when it comes to math, they seemed relieved to know that I

Third passage:

Rosie was right. Our friend Becky is so clumsy that her parents won't let her near any of the breakable stuff, like china and glassware, in the restaurant they own, the Moondance Café. It's as if there is some kind of jinx around her. At least I'm fairly coordinated. You really have to be if you're athletic, like I am. I'm pretty good at sports, especially baseball. Rosie's pretty coordinated, too. She had to be to polish her nails as perfectly as she does!

When we turned the corner, a group of about six boys from our class went riding

Title: "The Tiny Parents"

Author: Ellen Weiss & Mel Friedman

Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.9

First passage:

What would Julia Child do to give this dish a little extra something? he wondered. He opened the cupboard and took out a jar of strawberry jam. Perhaps just a suspicion of strawberry, he thought, stirring in a spoonful. And a dash of coconut for garnish. He sprinkled on a huge amount of the white flaky stuff.

Then he looked around the kitchen for something his parents could use for silverware and plates. His eye fell on a root-beer bottle cap that had been left lying on the counter. Okay, he thought, here's their plate. They can share it. Now

Second passage:

A gray, sleet-filled week began, with no more word from Ozzie Regenbogen. Eddie and Marie trudged off to school and trudged home again. They had a hard time keeping their minds on their schoolwork.

Later that afternoon they stopped off at the radio hobby store and bought a whole collection of things that Norton and Marigold had requested for their lab: transistors, printed computer circuits, very fine wire, and several items Eddie and Marie could hardly see, let alone identify. Their parents immediately began setting up a lab in the family room of the dollhouse.

On Tuesday, Eddie's best friend

Third passage:

Two weeks later, life had returned to normal in the Bicker household – as normal as things got in the Bicker household, anyway.

Mildred Grackle had been disappointed at first to see that Norton and Marigold were well and truly alive. But then she was cheered up by the fact that she could resume her lawsuit about the lemmings. A new court date was set. Several letters from Mildred about the matter were arriving in the mail every day.

And she didn't let up on the snooping, either. There seemed to be fresh Mildred-size nose prints on each window. She even

Title: "The Hardy Boys: The Alaskan Adventure"

Author: Franklin W. Dixon

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.8

First passage:

Frank and Joe went over to the dogs David pointed out, took them by the collars, and led them to the sled, where David harnessed them. Soon it was the turn of Ironheart, the lead dog. Frank scanned the rig and estimated at least forty feet between Ironheart and the front of the sled. Dogsledding needed a lot of room.

By now the team of huskies had turned into a powerhouse of energy and enthusiasm. Tails wagging, the eager dogs jumped up against the harnesses, ready to get moving. This was what they lived for. This was what they loved.

Second passage:

Frank opened his mouth to ask another question, but Mona held up her hand to stop him. She pulled on a pair of thick gloves and lifted the hot kettle. Justine held a piece of cloth over the mouth of an earthenware pot, and Mona poured the steamy liquid from the plants into the pot, straining it through the cloth.

She then scooped a ladleful of the brew into a thick mug, poured in a little spring water to cool it, stirred in a teaspoon of honey, and took it over to Peter. Justine helped her father to sit up.

Third passage:

The townspeople cheered, although a few shook their heads in disbelief at Peter's change of heart.

Frank felt his cheeks get warm as all at once the townspeople surged to their feet, applauding him and his brother. He knew these people would make it.

On Friday morning Frank and Joe helped David move his team, sled, and supplies out onto the river next to the landing strip. Gregg and his team were already there.

Justine was petting Gregg's lead dog, which bared its teeth at Ironheart as soon as he saw him. Justine pulled back, but Ironheart gave a loud

Title: "Goblins in the Castle"

Author: Bruce Coville

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.8

First passage:

I was found on the drawbridge of Toad-in-a-Cage Castle on a cold December night. I was naked, they tell me, wrapped only in a blanket and tucked in a basket. If the Baron had not been out riding that night he would not have seen me, and I would have been buried beneath the snow by morning.

To the surprise of Hulda, his housekeeper, the Baron didn't send me away. Instead, he hired a nurse to come and take care of me.

I liked Nurse, despite her unusual fondness for toads. However when I was about five she fell into

Second passage:

I knew what he meant. The sun was so bright compared to our flickering torch that at first I found it hard to see out there. Blinking, I looked back at the comfortable darkness we had just left and gasped in astonishment when I saw the enormous boulder Igor had pushed aside. He was even stronger than I had realized, almost stronger than I could imagine.

We had crossed under the moat and come up not far from shore. On the other side of the murky water loomed Toad-in-a-Cage Castle. I had never seen it from the outside before, and

Third passage:

Somehow the city knew it was over, too. Granny Pinchbottom had said that the King and his people had a mystic connection. She must have been right, because we could hear a rising cry of joy and triumph from below.

I crossed to the window to look out at the city. Goblins were flowing out of their buildings, filling the streets, singing, dancing, leaping about with the same wild energy I had seen before. Yet it was different in a way. It took me a moment to realize that what underlay the energy now was not rage by joy.

Herky

Title: "Phantom Valley: Scream of the Cat"

Author: Lynn Beach

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.8

First passage:

Her heart thudding, Tamara felt herself fly through the air, then land, hard, on the rocky ground. She looked up, dazed, then froze.

Not three feet away, crouched beside a bush, was a large, dark mountain lion with shining eyes and one torn ear. For what seemed an eternity, Tamara and the lion stared at each other, neither one moving. The lion was so close she could smell its warm, sour breath.

The mountain lion blinked slowly, then turned. Tamara followed it with her eyes until it disappeared into the brush. Then she pulled herself to her feet. Her arms

Second passage:

Stop it, she told herself. You've got to think about algebra. She reread through the explanation until she thought she understood it, then turned to the problems and began working.

Somehow Tamara managed to finish all her problems and still had fifteen minutes till her next class. She decided to get a head start on a history project, which was due in a month. She wandered over to the history and anthropology shelves, thinking she'd look for a book on something interesting enough to write a whole paper on. Almost at once a large, blue-bound book seemed to jump out

Third passage:

On the ridge, standing just below the highest peak, they could see the strong form of their friend silhouetted against the moon. His face was in shadow, but he seemed to be looking directly down at them. Then, as they watched, he turned slowly and suddenly jumped into the air, leaping toward the peak above him. As he rose through the air, almost in slow motion, his silhouette changed, growing longer, sleeker, flatter. He no longer had the shape of a man, but the shape of a mountain lion. Landing gracefully on the peak, the lion threw back its head

Title: "Harvey's Horrible Snake Disaster"

Author: Eth Clifford

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.7

First passage:

I could just see hundreds of them twitching all over the classroom. I began to get goose bumps.

I didn't mind Miss Platt being creative, but why snakes? I bet there wasn't one kid in class who wasn't thinking about staying home. I'd never get away with that. But I just didn't see how I was going to get through school on snake day.

Suddenly I didn't feel too hungry anymore. I pushed my chair back a little. My dog Butch, who was watching me from the doorway, sat up and studied me. I don't know how he does it.

Second passage

You know how sometimes a day starts off rotten, and you think it can't get any worse, but it does? I thought that I'd hit rock bottom when Charlie started driving the van. But I didn't know what rock bottom was until we were marched into the courtroom and there was my dad, good old Judge Willson the Fire-Eater himself, sitting on the bench. It's not a bench at all, just some kind of a big desk, but that's what they call it.

When my dad caught sight of me and Nora, he was stunned. But he was in the

Third passage

Dad and Mom drove Aunt Mildred and Nora to the airport that night. Georgeann and I stayed home. That gave my sister a chance to make a late night call to Hank. After all, she hadn't talked to him for at least an hour and a half.

I went upstairs and studied my room. I suppose I have it back for good now.

I was so tired I couldn't wait to hop into bed. But I couldn't fall asleep. I kept thinking about all the wild and exciting things that had happened when Nora was here. Now that everything is

Title: "World of Adventure: Escape From Fire Mountain"

Author: Gary Paulsen

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.7

First passage:

Jim Roberts was a well-respected outfitter and guide in the Wabash Mountains. The family-operated Tall Pines Hunting Lodge functioned as headquarters for his guided elk hunts. It catered to people from all over the country and was always full in the winter, with a long waiting list.

Now it was off-season. No hunting could take place in the summer, so there were no visitors. Nikki's parents were going to the city, several hundred miles away, for a week to help uncle Joe, who was recovering from knee surgery.

Nikki had convinced her folks that she was old enough to stay

Second passage:

When it was too dark to see any longer, Nikki pulled a flashlight from her bag, laid Molly down, and covered her up to her chin with dry leaves and grass. The little girl had gone to sleep while hanging on Nikki's back.

It seemed ridiculous to make a fire after what they had just been through, but Nikki knew it had to be done. Temperatures in the mountains dropped suddenly at night, and they had no cats or blankets.

While James collected wood, Nikki cleared a spot for the fire and dug a small hole with her hands. Using

Third passage:

The canoe grated on the rocks. Nikki knew it wouldn't stay snagged long.

It started moving again. The current had dislodged it, and the canoe was coming around. The ranger onshore coiled the rope and threw it out.

It was now or never. Nikki lunged for the rope, caught it, and fell into the water. The force of the river drove her into the rocks and pinned her there.

James held the paddle out to her. She wrapped the rope around one arm and reached for the oar. Her fingertips had barely touched it when the river slammed her back

Title: "The Beast"

Author: R.L. Stine

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.7

First passage:

I'm an expert on roller coasters. I ride them whenever I can. And I never ride just once. I always go back and ride again and again.

The third time is usually the best. By that time, your screaming muscles are limbered up and you can howl like a pro all the way.

I'd been to Paramount's Kings Island twice before. And I had ridden The Beast at least half a dozen times. But this was Ashley's first time.

She's twelve and I'm twelve, but I think I look older. She's about four inches shorter than me, even with all

Second passage:

We wandered through the crowd, trying to ignore the stares and comments. The line had grown longer at the Shoot-the-Chute. We also passed a long line at a ride call Moon Rocket.

Peering into the entrance, I saw a long rocket ship, very old-fashioned looking, with dozens of little cars like little train cars. It looked more like a huge caterpillar than a rocket. It was wrapped around a circular track.

And when the cars were filled with passengers, the rocket spun around the track, faster and faster. The passengers squealed and shouted, even though they weren't going as fast

Third passage:

I was pressed back against the seat as the car started to climb.

The winds whistled around us, faster, louder.

We're climbing right into the tornado! I thought.

We'll never get out. Never!

The winds will blow us off the track.

And even if we do ride to the end, I realized, the guards are right with us.

We haven't escaped at all.

Up, up. The tracks stretched steeper into the raging wind.

And then Ashley and I were both screaming as we plunged straight down.

Down into more wind and darting shadows.

An angry, shrill howl, the howl of

Title: "Lily's Crossing"
 Author: Patricia Reilly Giff
 Publisher: Random House, Inc.
 Publisher's R.L.: 4.6

First passage:

It was Friday afternoon. School was over. Goodbye, St. Pascal's, goodbye, Sister Eileen, goodbye, report card. Lily had put the report card in Gram's hand at the front door, walked right past her and up to her bedroom. Forty things were left to jam into a cardboard box.

Lily put the first one in, a bottle of lily-of-the-valley perfume, used up except for a little darkish stuff at the bottom. It smelled delicious, though. She waited to put the next thing in; she could hear Gram's footsteps on the stairs. She kept her back stiff, staring at the bottle. She

Second passage

There were two letters the next day, one from Poppy and one from Margaret. Lily managed to pick them up from the mailman before he even hit Cross Bay Boulevard. She'd been waiting on the corner for more than an hour, watching the street as far down as she could see, wondering if Margaret had gotten the letter she had sent. She had told her about Albert and the cat he was calling Paprika.

Lily yawned, tired from last night. Even after she had tiptoed through the dark kitchen at two or three in the morning and slipped under the

Third passage:

Still holding the cat, Lily wandered out to the porch and leaned on the screen. She smelled the bay and listened to the water lapping against the pilings.

Someone was fishing from a rowboat, probably one of the kids from Broad Channel. Lily raised her arm to wave, and smiled as the girl waved back.

Under her feet, the porch floor was gritty. Any minute Gram would be calling, telling her to give it a quick sweep, and find the sheets, and get her bed ready. Lily reached for her book and flipped through until she found the star. She

Title: "The Nic-Nacs and the Nic-Nac News: The Mystery Box"

Author: Joan Lowery Nixon

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.6

First passage:

She tucked her press card in the pocket of her shorts and took Mandy's hand.

They waited while Amy dashed into her house to get her own press card, then raced each other down the street to Mrs. Hopkins's house at the end of the block.

Carlos ran up the porch stairs first and flung himself against the wall. Nikki knew he'd be first. Carlos was the best runner in their class. Maybe in their whole grade.

Nikki got to the porch last. She didn't like being last, especially since she knew she might have come in second if it

Second passage:

Nikki had never seen a living room like Mrs. Hopkins's living room. There were dozens of small, lacy pillows on the chairs and sofas and lots of little tables cluttered with dozens of photographs in silver frames. Among them Nikki saw a tiny stone elephant and a pink china rose and a crystal box. She wished she could look at all the wonderful things in Mrs. Hopkins's living room.

Mrs. Hopkins sat down, so the rest of them did too. The chair Nikki sat in was covered in a dark-green satin that felt cool and slippery against her bare arms

Third passage:

On Saturday, when the Nic-Nacs met at the party, a crowd had already begun to gather. Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins's yard was bright with colored balloons. People were carrying platters and bowls of food into the house, and little children with big paper cups of lemonade were spilling it on their clothes.

Even though it was the end of summer it was still hot, so the Nic-Nacs wore shorts and T-shirts and sandals or flip-flops. Except for Carlos. He wore his favorite high-top running shoes. He didn't mind being hot because he wanted to win the races.

Even though it

Title: "Orp Goes to the Hoops"

Author: Suzy Kline

Publisher: The Hearst Corporation

Publisher's R.L.: 4.6

First passage:

Basketball. My friend Derrick asked me if I wanted to try out for the team. I was still thinking about it. My dad was a pretty good player. We have pictures of his high school and college teams in the dining room. He even got an award for being the scholar-athlete at his high school. Most of the basketballs in our attic are half filled with air. Usually Derrick and I put them on our heads when we feel like being silly. I haven't bothered to fill them up and use them. There's even a hoop in the garage but

Second passage:

Writing to her is kind of like having a girlfriend, but no one has to know about it. I like it like that. I don't have a lot of privacy in my life. Derrick thinks she's a pen pal. Chloe thinks she's just a good friend. I told Jenny Lee not to put any red hearts on the outside of the envelope.

But I said she could put as many as she wanted on the inside.

Just before I went to bed that night, I lay back on my pillow and read her letter for the fourth time. My dog

Third passage:

As we walked back down the court, I noticed the guys from Hartford Catholic were hugging each other. They thought the game was over and they had won.

Ike was standing five feet to the right side of the basket. Moses was at half court. Hartford Catholic had two guards on him. They thought I would throw the ball to him and he would fire a long bomb.

Danny and Billy were running back and forth to divert attention.

Finally the referee handed me the ball.

The crowd turned silent. Everything was still like my early mornings.
The golden basketball

Title: "James and the Giant Peach"

Author: Roald Dahl

Publisher: Penguins Books USA Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.5

First passage:

Here is James Henry Trotter when he was about four.

Up until this time, he had had a happy life, living peacefully with his mother and father in a beautiful house beside the sea. There were always plenty of other children for him to play with, and there was the sandy beach for him to run about on, and the oceans to paddle in. It was the perfect life for a small boy.

Then, one day, James's mother and father went to London to do some shopping, and there a terrible thing happened. Both of them suddenly got eaten up

Second passage:

In a few minutes everything was ready.

It was very quiet now on the top of the peach. There was nobody in sight – nobody except the Earthworm.

One half of the Earthworm, looking like a great, thick, juicy, pink sausage, lay innocently in the sun for all the seagulls to see.

The other half of him was dangling down the tunnel.

James was crouching close beside the Earthworm in the tunnel entrance, just below the surface, waiting for the first seagull. He had a loop of silk string in his hands.

The Old-Green-Grasshopper and the Ladybug were further down the

Third passage:

And thus the journey ended. But the travelers lived on. Every one of them became rich and successful in the new country.

The Centipede was made Vice-President-in-Charge-of-Sales of a high-class firm of boot and shoe manufacturers.

The Earthworm, with his lovely pink skin, was employed by a company that made women's face creams to speak commercials on television.

The Silkworm and Miss Spider, after they had both been taught to make nylon thread instead of silk, set up a factory together and made ropes for tightrope walkers.

The Glow-worm became the light inside the torch on the Statue of Liberty,

Title: "Mrs. Abercorn and the Bunce Boys"

Author: Liza Fosburgh

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.5

First passage:

Will stretched out on the sofa and stared at the ceiling.

Otis turned on the television and thought about the time Bink hit Will so hard he had a loose tooth for a week. That was only about a week after Bink moved in with Mom and Will wasn't ready to accept that yet and instead of keeping quiet about it, Will said he'd be damned if he'd clean up after that slob. Mom had shouted at him about being rude and he'd shouted back, and pow! Bink hit him. After that, Bink tried to be nice to Will but

Second passage:

Otis liked the way Mrs. Abercorn dropped her sweater on a chair or tossed her straw gardening hat on the sofa, and she let the mail pile up so high on the dining-room table he wondered if she ever had eaten a meal there. Of course, they were only there for lunches, and then they just sat around outside or, if it was raining, in front of the television. She'd push some magazines aside and prop her skinny legs, looking like toothpicks beneath those khaki pants she mostly wore, right up to the coffee table. And when she finished reading

Third passage:

Otis felt his stomach constrict again. He looked at Will and knew one of them had to say something. He sure wished it would be Will. But when he saw Will lean back in his chair and narrow his eyes, he knew it was up to him, old Otis himself. His head was full of wild thoughts flashing by like comets, and he had to take a big, deep breath to clear his mind.

Otis couldn't remember when he and Will had deliberately lied about anything. Of course, there were times when they just didn't tell the absolute truth, like

Title: "The Bunnysitters"

Author: Kate Banks

Publisher: Random House, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.5

First passage:

Nicholas and Alex had been looking forward to the derby all year. Now it was just eight weeks away. It seemed like a long time, but it wasn't – not for building a derby car. First you had to find a sponsor to help out with expenses. Then you had to order a car kit from the International Derby Association. That got you started. The kit included drawings, patterns, and specifications, plus the axles and most of the hardware. You had to come up with the rest of the car parts yourself.

Ned's Hardware had agreed to sponsor Nicholas and Alex.

Second passage:

Nicholas felt very responsible now. Too responsible. He and Alex had twelve rabbits to look after, not counting Harry. They had to build a home for them, and soon they'd have to start feeding and exercising them. The trouble was that they still had to build their derby cars. Then there was school and homework, never mind baseball. They'd already missed three practices. Nicholas had told his coach that he had mumps, and Alex had called in sick with chicken pox. They were running out of childhood diseases. If only they could find someone who'd take the rabbits. They went

Third passage:

But he knew better. As much trouble as he was, Nicholas knew his mother really loved him and Abbey. She'd feel awful if someone took them away. Nicholas thought how Harry must feel and breathed a deep sigh. Maybe they should tell Mrs. Peach the truth. At least then Harry could be with her babies. They could always find another rabbit for Mrs. Peach. Nicholas shut his eyes, but he couldn't sleep. He tried counting sheep, but they only turned into rabbits. Rabbits, rabbits, everywhere.

Next morning, bright and early, Mrs. Peach called to thank them for looking after Harry.

Title: "Scary Scary Huckleberry"

Author: Judy Delton

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.4

First passage:

My name is Anthony Doyle. We live with my mother in a brand-new condominium in Huckleberry Heights. My mom, Trixie Doyle, owns her own faucet company. She loves faucets. Gold ones, silver ones, bronze, pewter. You name it, she'll design it. The company is called Trixie's Taps.

We used to live in St. Paul, Minnesota, in an apartment, but my mom wanted a yard and a barbecue and fresh air and a tree. So she moved us out here and we live at number 16 Tiger Tail Trail.

Lily lives down the street, and so does Marcy's friend Daisy Otis.

Second passage:

No one knew who I was. This was fun, having another life inside this suit.

Ahead of me was a giant ketchup bottle helping itself to cherry punch at the buffet table. It could have been anyone! My principal or teacher or Mrs. Otis or my mom! This was definitely spooky, not knowing my own friends.

A couple of teabags were dancing together in the middle of the room. And some teddy bears were bobbing for apples. I suddenly had an awful thought. How could I win Lily back if I didn't know who she was, and she didn't know

Third passage:

For the second time in one day I pictured myself in the newspaper. BOY DIES TO SAVE LONELY WIDOW. There would be a picture of me. An old one from the album my mom kept. They would have a talk at school about what a good guy I was. All the kids would be crying. Well, not all of them. Lily and Punkin Head might not cry.

Then I realized I wasn't dead. I had dropped into a pile of hay with George and Lenny on top of me. It was quiet for about one second, and then it was

Title: "Sport"

Author: Luise Fitzhugh

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.4

First passage:

Sport laughed some more. He felt at home. All of those old decisions about his life had been made when he was four years old. It was all a long time ago and he had had no part in it. Of his life before living with his father he remembered only a white sunny room and a white starched nurse. He had had visits with his mother every time she was in town, but they had been strange, impersonal trips to Brooks Brothers to be outfitted, then lunch at a restaurant. He hadn't even been able to eat because his

Second passage:

I don't want her up here either, thought Sport and went to his room. The only clean shirt he had was red-and-white checked. He took a shower and put on the shirt and his gray suit, feeling sad and heavy the whole time.

At eleven, he yelled good-bye to his father and went down the steps. The long black car was just pulling up to the curb. As he came down the front steps of his house, he caught a glimpse of his mother in the backseat. She seemed to have furs pulled up to her chin.

Egbert, the chauffeur,

Third passage:

He looked around. The shades were all pulled down. He went around and pulled them up. He went into the kitchen and looked in the icebox. There were a lot of things left over from the party. He got them out and put them on the table. He opened a Coke and began to eat everything he could get his hands on, cramming it into his mouth.

Maybe I could find out where they are on Long Island and go there. No, he cautioned himself, I've heard that people like to be alone on their honeymoons. Maybe I could go

Title: "Nickelodeon – Are You Afraid of the Dark: The Tale of the Campfire Vampires"

Author: Clayton Emery

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4 4

First passage:

Doug held his head in his hands and wished for the tenth time that day that he wasn't Zeke's cousin. People assumed because they were related, they were alike. Doug hated that idea. Unfortunately, both Doug and Zeke shared the same last name – Wester – so it was hard for Doug to pretend he'd never even met Zeke before, which is what he wished were true sometimes. The boys were spending these last two weeks of summer vacation on a canoe trip down the Allagash River in northern Maine. They had started in the town of Allagash and were headed to

Second passage:

Zeke didn't argue. Without another word he dropped to all fours and crawled into the tangle.

The woody maze didn't look wide enough for Zeke's shoulders, or even a cat. The laurel stems were thicker than his fingers, as hard as iron bars, and so interwoven it was impossible to shove them aside. But the slot where the pukwudgies hovered let him slip inside as far as his waist.

The fairy lights then shifted and turned right, where there seemed to be only upright granite. Zeke followed, praying he didn't get his jeans hung up, or a foot or hand

Third passage:

Zeke barely glimpsed the sight, so bright was the flash. Through blue dots he saw the roof blow into the air. It sailed sixty feet and crashed amid trees far down the slope. Wood from the tower smashed into splinters that soared on the wind and fell like rain. The water tank exploded along its seams. Pipes split, burned, and crumbled.

In that split second the bolt sizzled down the ladder and stabbed deep into the ground.

The wendigos on the ladder were electrocuted instantly. As if in slow motion, Zeke saw burning hearts pop like flashbulbs. Once the hearts

Title: "What It's All About"

Author: Norma Klein

Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.3

First passage:

Jonah and I go to this private school in New York called The Whitman School. It's right near where I live, so on nice days I can even walk home. I live on Ninety-sixth Street between Central Park West and Columbus. We have part of a brownstone, and the rest has other people in it. When Jonah comes to visit me after school, we always walk up Columbus so we can stop at Mr. Clark's stationery store. We get Wacky Packs or candy or stuff like that. What's not fair is that Jonah not only gets an allowance, but his

Second passage:

When we came in, we were starving. I thought Mom would be up by then since it was ten o'clock, but she was still sleeping. I decided to make French toast. I know how. Mom says I can use the top of the stove, but not the oven if she's not up. Suzu ate around four slices! I guess I'm a pretty good cook. I think I'll write a cookbook after I finish about Mamie.

I went over and looked at Mom's calendar. I wanted to count how many days there were till my birthday. Today, the third, was circled

Third passage:

Mom did fix up the study for me. It makes a really great place to type. It's small, but it has curtains at the windows and a bean-bag chair in the corner. Francesca and I come up here a lot to talk. Of course, we play with Suzu too. It's funny. Francesca is an only child so she thinks Suzu is really cute and actually wants to play with her. She says when she's thirteen, she's going to ask Mom if she can be Suzu's babysitter.

Francesca and Gabe are living in an apartment in Greenwich Village on Morton Street.

Title: "Culpeppers Adventures: Dunc's Doll"

Author: Gary Paulsen

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.3

First passage:

They separated, and Dunc went to the brush across the road. Amos went to the gate. On the side of the gate was a plaque with a push button and Amos pushed the button.

Nothing happened for what seemed a long time.

Then the dog came to the gate. It stood on its back legs, its front feet up on the metal, and looked at Amos, down into Amos's eyes.

Amos turned and looked across the road at where Dunc was hiding, raised his arms, and shrugged. The movement wiggled his wig, and he straightened it. Dunc made a furious

Second passage:

Until then everything had been going well. Or sort of well. The dog wasn't so good and the table wasn't so good, but Dunc and Amos still had luck on their side.

Until then.

At that moment the pepper container in Dunc's windbreaker pocket fell to the side. It was still open from the last sprinkle on the dog's nose.

It was almost empty. But some pepper had caught on the lip at the top, and when it fell sideways, the pepper dropped out and down.

Directly into Amos's nose.

It wasn't just a sneeze. The sound was more like

Third passage:

It was still open.

Just enough. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Amos just to his rear. He aimed his head at the opening and dived, at a full run, out the window.

Dunc hit the ground hard and next to him sensed a dark form, a large dark form covered with hair and snarling snot, and before either he or the form could move, Amos shot through the window and landed directly on the shadow.

Which was the Rottweiler.

There was a moment of stunned silence, half a second, then another half, and Dunc was up,

Title: "Angel Park All-Stars: Making the Team"

Author: Dean Hughes

Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.3

First passage:

Coach Wilkens had the players sit on the grass outside the third-base line. They were wearing their game uniforms for the first time – blue-and-white, like the big-league Dodgers. It was a pretty Saturday morning, warm and clear but not too hot.

Kenny had the new glove that his dad had bought for him, and he had gotten the uniform with the number he wanted: big number seven. He even had wristbands and a batting glove – the way most of the guys did. He felt like a real pro – except that he was very nervous.

The coach had put the team

Second passage

Kenny came through again. He gave up a hit but no runs. And Harlan caught a throw from Danny for a putout.

Almost

He dropped it, but he picked it up in time for the out. Kenny could see how happy – or at least relieved – he was. Harlan grinned as though he had made the play of the game

That's how the game kept going. The Dodgers held the Padres to three runs – even though Boschi pitched the last two innings.

One of the runs was Jacob's fault. He let a ball get past him that he should have fielded.

Third passage

Heat blazed one in, and Kenny let it go by for a strike. He knew he had to get his bat around quickly against that kind of speed. But now he had the timing.

The next pitch was a hot one, but Kenny's bat was there to meet it. The ball jumped off the wooded bat with that sweet click he loved to hear. It shot down the line in right field.

Kenny thought he could go all the way to third, but as he rounded second he saw his coach standing near third with his hands in the air.

Title: "Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great"

Author: Judy Blume

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.2

First passage:

I'm glad there's only one more week of school before summer vacation. Today was so hot! My clothes stuck to me and my brain felt all tired out. I didn't even finish my math in school. So now I have to do it for homework.

I walked into the lobby of my apartment building thinking how good a big, cold drink would taste. I pushed the Up elevator button and waited. When the elevator got to the lobby Henry opened the gate and I stepped in. Just as he was about to take me upstairs Peter Hatcher and his dumb

Second passage:

After three weeks of day camp my favorite activity is still pottery. Mouse, Russ Bindel, and Sam Sweeney agree. The four of us haven't switched activities yet, even though we are supposed to try something new every week. Denise says by the end of the summer we should each have a really good bowl to take home with us. My mother is not as happy about pottery as I am. This is because I come home covered with clay every day. It even gets in my hair and ears. The only bad things about pottery are I have to put

Third passage:

The next few days we were all busy planning our Farewell to Tarrytown. Daddy said he would do the cooking on the outside grill and Mom said we'd set up tables and chairs in the backyard.

At the last minute I remembered about Betsy Ellis and how she gets hives from dogs, but Daddy said she would be all right as long as she didn't get near Jennifer.

The day of our party started out cloudy and Mom was very disappointed. I thought if it rained we could get up a good game of indoor hide-and-seek. But by noon the

Title: "Then Again, Maybe I Won't"

Author: Judy Blume

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.2

First passage:

I don't know what I'll do about my paper route next year, when I go to junior high. I don't want to give it up. But Jefferson Junior has an after-school basketball league and I want to play in it. Basketball is my favorite sport. I just wish I was taller. My brother Ralph says I'll probably sprout up at fourteen like he did. I hope I don't have to wait that long. It's important to be tall when you're playing basketball. You're much closer to the basket. I play at the Y all day Saturday and every Sunday afternoon.

Second passage:

My father offered Ralph and my uncles cigars. He laughed as he told them each one cost \$1.00. When they all lit up, Aunt Rose asked Ginger to recite for us. Ginger's been doing that ever since I can remember. You'd think by now she'd know how dumb she sounds. You'd think she'd be too embarrassed to stand up in front of a bunch of relatives and say her stupid poems. But no! She jumped right up and started.

She had some new poems this year. Two about Thanksgiving, naturally, and one about love by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. When she

Third passage:

I had a funny dream last night. It wasn't about Lisa. It was about Corky, only she looked like Lisa. But still, I knew it was Corky. And I wasn't just looking at her either. It was a pretty good dream. I wonder what Corky will really look like when she's sixteen? I think I'll ask Dr. Fogel about my dreams. Can too many of them hurt me?

I shift gears and pedal backwards.

I think what I'll do is - I'll go home and put my binoculars away on the top shelf of my closet - over in the corner - so

Title: "Young Indiana Jones and the Circle of Death"

Author: William McCay

Publisher: Random House, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.2

First passage:

As they swung off the road and bounced along a rutted field, the fog seemed to clear. It still flowed along the ground. But the boys could make out a jumble of shapes against the brightening horizon.

The land ahead of them was flat as a table. There were no trees, just scrubby winter grass. A chill wind blew – and suddenly Stonehedge was looming out of the mist.

It was an eerie sight. The hulking shapes were huge. Once, perhaps, they had been smooth blocks. But the weather had gnawed away at them leaving them worn and gaunt. It was

Second passage

Indy crept along the branch until he reached the top of the wall. Then he peered down into the grounds of the estate.

The areas around the mansion itself were carefully mowed lawns. But closer to the wall, things got wilder. To the right was a small grove of oak trees. And moving among the oaks were shadowy figures.

At first, Indy thought his eyes were playing tricks. The figures did seem weird – ghostly. Then Indy realized they were wearing robes – long, black robes.

As he watched, members of the group began lighting torches. Then one figure, taller than the

Third passage

The former Arch-Druid wouldn't have impressed his cult followers looking the way he did now. His flowing robe was gone. He wore a black turtleneck and pants, and a heavy jacket. His long hair was mussed, and a haze of stubble surrounded his carefully trimmed beard. Somewhere along the line, he must have hidden in a hayloft. Bits of straw clung to von Pappendorf's dark outfit. Some even stuck out of his hair.

The German spy would almost have looked comical – if it weren't for his gun in his hand. And then there was the cold, trapped look in his

Title: "The Gift of the Pirate Queen"

Author: Patricia Reilly Giff

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.1

First passage:

By the time she reached School Street and the Danville Valley School, she was out of breath. She slowed down as she went around to the school yard and pulled open the heavy side doors.

It was quiet in the hall. The only sounds were the rubbery slap of her boots against the tile floor and the hum of the fluorescent light near the stairs.

She passed Amy's classroom and went back to peek through the little window in the door. Mrs. Gold, the fourth-grade teacher, was bent over her desk, marking papers.

Grace stood there for a moment. If

Second passage:

As soon as they finished their TV dinners, Grace dug around in the closet until she found her mother's best white tablecloth.

She ran her hands over it, thinking of her mother ironing it every Christmas. Her mother would drag out the ironing board, grumbling about how she hated to iron, complaining that the tablecloth wasn't worth all that work. But halfway through she'd be singing Christmas carols.

Grace could almost hear the sound of her mother's voice. She closed her eyes tight, concentrating as hard as she could, trying to see what her mother's mouth looked like, trying to

Third passage:

They sat there quietly for a few minutes, then Grace realized she could see her mother's face, not blurry the way it usually was, but sharp and clear. Her mother finding the gift of courage and running after the dog, her mother casting her line into the water on a sunny day, her mother smiling at her.

Suddenly Lisa popped into her mind. Lisa, dirty and loud. She thought back to what Bianca had said about Lisa not caring. And then she remembered Lisa running for the candy, grabbing the notebook.

They had been wrong about Lisa, she was sure.

Title: "Wayside School is Falling Down"

Author: Louis Sachar

Publisher: The Hearst Corporation

Publisher's R.L.: 4.1

First passage:

Louis, the yard teacher, frowned.

The school yard was a mess. There were pencils and pieces of paper everywhere. How'd all this junk get here? he wondered. Well, I'm not going to pick it up!

It wasn't his job to pick up garbage. He was just supposed to pass out the balls during lunch and recess, and also make sure the kids didn't kill each other.

He sighed, then began cleaning it up. He loved all the children at Wayside School. He didn't want them playing on a dirty playground.

As he was picking up the pencils and pieces of

Second passage:

Every day after lunch Mrs. Jewls read a story to the class.

Dana hated stories.

The last book Mrs. Jewls read was a story about a spider and a pig. The pig was real cute and the spider was wise.

Dana thought it was a horrible book. It made her laugh too much.

Everyone else laughed too, but the problem was that Dana always kept laughing long after everyone else in the class had stopped. It was very embarrassing. And sometimes she broke out laughing at a part that wasn't even funny because she remembered something funny that had happened

Third passage:

The school was filled with cows.

From all over the countryside, cows had heard Mrs. Jewls's cowbell and heeded the call. There were thousands of them. They filled the stairs and all the classrooms.

There was no way for the children to get down. Helicopters finally came and took them one at a time off the roof.

Wayside School didn't blow down. It didn't burn down. It wasn't struck with lightning, sucked up in a tornado, or destroyed by an earthquake.

It was cowed.

No one knew how to get rid of the cows. Cows are strange animals. They don't

Title: "Gooflumps: Stay Out of the Bathroom"

Author: R. U. Slime

Publisher: Random House, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.1

First passage:

I had no idea if my plan was working or not. The Venusian mercenaries were following me, though. That was a good sign. I ran through the maze of dimly lit corridors. I kept expecting to see a squadron of Martians come around the corner and cut me off at any minute.

Up another level – almost there! The Venusians were right on my heels!

I slammed into the ladder that led to the Secret Emergency Control Room at full speed. I put my foot on the first rung and a photon bolt nearly blew it off.

I swung around and

Second passage:

It was the new toilet – coming out of the bathroom and heading straight toward me, lighting up the hallway with its neon glow!

I backed into my room and slammed my bedroom door shut. I stood near my bed, my legs shaking with fear. The toilet crashed through my door and kept right on coming!

Why did I have to be born into a family of heavy sleepers? Nobody was going to come save me!

The toilet backed me up against the wall. Then it opened its lid. Water and light were churning around inside – and it started sucking things

Third passage:

After some really lousy snacks my mother made – burnt popcorn, rotting peaches, warm soda – we went upstairs and destroyed the toilet transporter in the bathroom.

Then we dismantled the mega-transporter in the garage, and Mom went into her office to do some studying. Dad started picking out ties for the upcoming week.

Cynthia was on the phone the minute we got back to Earth, telling all her friends why she'd looked so horrible at school that week.

They didn't believe her. Would you?

After dinner I went over to Roger's house. As a reward for helping us, his parents had

Title: "What is the Teacher's Toupee Doing in the Fish Tank?"

Author: Jerry Piasecki

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.0

First passage:

At Doverton School there were all sorts of rumors about what went on in Mr. Finelli's classroom. The shades were always drawn, and a Do Not Disturb - Learning In Progress sign stayed hung on the door. But no one who'd been assigned to Mr. Finelli's classroom would ever talk about what actually happened behind that door. It was as if they were part of some secret club, and sworn to silence. That's probably what scared the other students the most. Once someone entered Finelli-ville, he or she was never the same again.

Mr. Finelli himself was as thin as a

Second passage:

Meanwhile Mindy tried calling Frankie back. This time she had to leave a message because his mom said he was busy polishing his head.

The ARF Committee had decided to meet the next morning on the climbing thing that sat on the playground at school. It was made of logs and old tires. The PTA had bought it with the money they'd raised from the bake sale at open house. Nobody really knew what the thing was, but it was fun to climb on and fall from.

Jimmy Shulin was the only one who didn't like it. Frankie didn't understand

Third passage:

They didn't know it for another few seconds, but their close encounter had just begun.

Suddenly the door to the locker room was flung open, and every sixth-grade teacher in the district walked in.

There were eight rows of lockers in the Harrison High locker room. At the sound of the teachers approaching the locker-room door, Mindy and Company had dashed down one of them. Luckily for them the teachers settled down on the benches right near the door.

While the teachers talked and complained about having to wait in the locker room until they were introduced to the audience

Title: "Goosebumps: Piano Lessons Can Be Murder"

Author: R.L. Stine

Publisher: Scholastic Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.0

First passage:

I thought I was going to hate moving into a new house. But actually, I had fun.

I played a pretty mean joke on Mom and Dad.

While they were busy in the front room showing the moving men where to put stuff, I went exploring. I found a really neat room to the side of the dining room.

It had big windows on two sides looking out onto the back yard. Sunlight poured in, making the room brighter and a lot more cheery than the rest of the old house.

The room was going to be our new family

Second passage:

When I finally started to drift off to sleep, I heard the piano music start again.

Dr. Shreek arrived promptly at two the next afternoon. Mom and Dad were out in the garage, unpacking more cartons. I took Dr. Shreek's coat, then led him into the family room.

It was a cold, blustery day outside, threatening snow. Dr. Shreek's cheeks were pink from the cold. With his white hair and mustache, and round belly under his baggy, white shirt, he looked more like Santa Claus than ever.

He rubbed his pudgy hands together to warm them and motioned to me

Third passage:

As I stared in disbelief, the ghostly hands swarmed over Mr. Toggle and lifted him off the floor. He squirmed and struggled, but he couldn't free himself from their powerful grasp.

They carried him to the door and then out. I followed to the doorway to watch.

Mr. Toggle appeared to be floating, floating into the deep woods beside the school. The hands carried him away. He disappeared into the tangled trees.

I knew he'd never been seen again.

I spun around to thank the ghost woman for trying to warn me.

But she was gone, too.

I was all

Title: "It's New! It's Improved! It's Terrible!"

Author: Stephen Manes

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Publisher's R.L.: 4.0

First passage:

They were new! They were improved! They were amazing! They were neat. Arnold Schlemph had to have them. That was all there was to it. If he didn't get them, he would die. Or worse.

Arnold moved up to the TV for a closer look. There was no doubt about it. Helicopter Shoes were the greatest footwear in the universe.

The yellow helicopters on the high tops actually glowed in the dark. The zigzag designs on the shoelaces even glowed in the daytime. The soles had a secret bounce-gas that made you jump as high as humanly possible. And they

Second passage:

Will helped – in his own way. He insisted the fastest way to clean anything up was to point your finger at the mess and say the name of some famous national brand of cleaning product. But every time he tried it, it didn't work at all.

When Arnold turned on the vacuum cleaner, Will complained about how loud it was. He said every vacuum cleaner he had ever heard of played snappy music while it worked.

When it came time to help carry the TV set downstairs, Will grunted and groaned under the weight. He said everything he ever had

Third passage:

The hardest part came later. His parents made him phone Grandma and tell her how much he liked her birthday present – without actually mentioning what had happened to it.

The next day at the playground Arnold wore his plain, beat-up old sneakers. He didn't have bounce-gas soles. He didn't have zigzag shoelaces. He wasn't Helicopter Jones. But he still dribbled like a pro. He could still make any shot he wanted to. Five in a row! Six in a row! Seven! Eight – well, even people with very expensive shoes miss once in a while.

And even though Arnold's Helicopter Shoes

Appendix B : Data Collected From Passages

Book Title	Word Count	Character Count	Words per Sentences	Characters per word	Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level	Average Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level	Average Sentence Count	Syllable Count	Fry Reading Grade Level	Average Fry Reading Grade Level
Honey Girl (5.9)	100	450	14.4	4.6	6.5		5.9	132	7	
	100	435	16.6	4.2	5.8		6	124	6	
	100	444	11.3	4.4	5.3	5.9	6.9	135	6	6.3
Mindy Wise (5.9)	100	450	11.2	4.3	5.1		8.8	139	6	
	100	447	15.1	4.3	6.5		6.8	139	7	
	100	453	10.0	4.3	5.4	5.7	10	146	7	6.7
Cold Shoulder Road(5.9)	100	441	23.3	4.2	6.9		3.9	136	9	
	100	475	15.4	4.8	7.8		5.9	140	7	
	100	437	8.2	4.2	2.6	5.8	12	127	3	6.3
Babe...(5.8)	100	478	18.0	4.5	7.6		5	140	8	
	100	447	14.5	4.3	6.2		6.8	136	7	
	100	442	18.2	4.2	6.6	6.8	5.5	126	6	7.0
Secret of the Andes (5.8)	100	423	11.7	4.1	3.9		8.5	125	4	
	100	417	13.5	4.0	5.6		7.4	134	6	
	100	431	8.6	4.1	2.7	4.1	10.3	131	4	4.7
Tale of the Souvenir Shop(5.8)	100	489	13.4	4.7	7.3		7.1	148	8	

Book Title	Word Count	Character Count	Words per Sentences	Characters per word	Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level	Average Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level	Average Sentence Count	Syllable Count	Fry Reading Grade Level	Average Fry Reading Grade Level
	100	426	15.5	4.1	6.9		6.5	137	7	
	100	459	11.5	4.5	4.1	6.1	8.8	128	4	6.3
Paddington (5.6)	100	437	20.0	4.2	7.7		4.9	135	8	
	100	413	14.3	4.0	5.0		6.2	128	6	
	100	480	16.7	4.7	8.8	7.2	5.9	153	9	7.7
Night of a Thousand Pizzas (5.7)	100	513	14.3	5.0	7.2		5.9	157	10	
	100	458	12.5	4.5	5.2		8	133	6	
	100	445	20.0	4.4	7.6	6.7	6.5	138	7	7.7
The Enormous Egg (5.7)	100	385	14.3	3.7	3.7		6.8	115	4	
	100	428	17.2	4.0	6.8		5.9	131	7	
	100	435	22.2	4.2	9.1	6.5	4.6	113	6	5.7
Take to the Sky (5.6)	100	469	14.3	4.6	6.3		6.1	134	7	
	100	459	11.1	4.4	3.8		8.8	129	4	
	100	499	11.1	4.8	5.4	5.2	8.9	136	5	5.3
Voyages of Doctor Dolittle (5.6)	100	437	20.0	4.3	6.3		5.1	133	7	

Book Title	Word Count	Character Count	Words per Sentences	Characters per word	Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level	Average Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level	Average Sentence Count	Syllable Count	Fry Reading Grade Level	Average Fry Reading Grade Level
	100	441	12.5	4.3	2.8		7.1	131	6	
	100	415	20.0	4.0	6.0	5.0	5.9	128	6	6.3
Trouble River (5.6)	100	439	20.0	4.3	7.2		4.9	129	7	
	100	459	16.7	4.5	6.4		5.9	131	7	
	100	460	16.7	4.4	6.6	6.7	6.4	134	7	7.0
Johnny Tremain (5.5)	100	458	12.5	4.4	4.6		7.2	128	6	
	100	443	14.3	4.3	6.0		7.1	139	7	
	100	474	9.1	4.6	3.2	4.6	10.3	128	3	5.3
Grizzly (5.5)	100	458	12.5	4.5	5.3		8.0	133	6	
	100	443	10.0	4.3	3.2		9.2	127	4	
	100	420	10.0	4.1	2.2	3.6	9.9	122	3	4.3
Go for it, Patti (5.5)	100	440	16.7	4.3	7.2		5.4	142	8	
	100	459	11.1	4.5	5.7		8.9	141	6	
	100	438	10.0	4.2	3.0	5.3	9.2	128	4	6.0
My Babysitter Bites Again (5.4)	100	413	12.5	4	4.4		8.1	128	5	
	100	465	11.1	4.5	5.2		9.2	136	5	

Book Title	Word Count	Character Count	Words per Sentences	Characters per word	Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level	Average Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level	Average Sentence Count	Syllable Count	Fry Reading Grade Level	Average Fry Reading Grade Level
	100	457	12.5	4.4	4.8	4.8	8.4	134	5	5.0
One-Man Team (5.4)	100	443	12.5	4.3	6.4		7.2	142	7	
	100	452	14.3	4.4	4.9		7.1	130	6	
	100	398	16.4	3.9	5.6	5.6	5.8	123	6	6.3
Anastasia at your Service (5.4)	100	513	9.7	4.8	7.1		8.8	159	9	
	100	492	14.5	4.7	6.0		6.7	143	7	
	100	464	10.5	4.4	4.5	5.9	8.8	147	8	7.0
Horse Crazy #4 (5.3)	100	470	23.0	4.6	11.2		4	147	10	
	100	422	21.2	4.1	8.3		4.8	133	7	
	100	458	23.0	4.4	10.8	10.1	4.5	149	9	8.7
Charlie Pippen (5.3)	100	476	12.5	4.5	4.9		7.8	137	6	
	100	504	11.7	4.8	6.5		7.4	152	8	
	100	461	10.0	4.4	3.2	4.9	9.4	127	4	6.0
Everyone Else's Parents... (5.3)	100	451	11.2	4.3	3.8		9	133	5	
	100	443	10.6	4.3	3.9		9.5	129	4	

Book Title	Word Count	Character Count	Words per Sentences	Characters per word	Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level	Average Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level	Average Sentence Count	Syllable Count	Fry Reading Grade Level	Average Fry Reading Grade Level
	100	450	12.7	4.2	4.7	4.1	7.8	132	6	5.0
Everything Stinks (5.2)	100	407	12.2	3.9	4.3		8.1	128	5	
	100	403	19.2	3.8	6.1		5.1	126	7	
	100	400	11.7	3.8	3.0	4.5	7.5	125	5	5.7
All But Alice (5.2)	100	473	49.0	4.6	12.0		2.1	143	10	
	100	4.0	16.1	4.0	5.1		6.2	122	6	
	100	441	13.4	4.2	3.5	6.9	7.5	123	5	7.0
World's Worst Fairy... (5.2)	100	453	12.4	4.4	5.5		7.8	139	6	
	100	452	42.5	4.4	9.4		2.9	140	10	
	100	482	15.3	4.7	7.7	7.5	6.5	146	8	8.0
The Return of the Plant... (5.1)	100	393	24.5	3.8	8.7		4.1	128	8	
	100	429	16.1	4.1	5.4		6.1	130	6	
	100	489	20.5	4.8	8.9	7.7	4.9	138	8	7.3
Beethoven's Cat (5.1)	100	453	23.5	4.3	7.8		4.2	148	10	
	100	429	11.0	4.1	5.0		9.1	140	6	
	100	420	11.0	4.0	4.3	5.7	9.1	133	5	7.0

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The Diamond War (5.1)	100	450	22.5	4.4	9.0		4.7	136	8	
	100	501	21.0	5.1	10.5		4.9	151	10	
	100	416	14.8	4.2	5.8	8.4	6.5	131	6	8.0
Five Children & It (5.0)	100	418	28.0	3.9	10.5		1.9	137	9	
	100	405	20.0	3.9	7.5		5	129	7	
	100	416	14.2	4.0	4.8	7.6	7	125	5	7.0
Frank and Stein...(5.0)	100	399	9.8	3.8	2.8		9.5	124	3	
	100	411	8.4	3.9	2.2		10.4	124	3	
	100	439	9.7	4.2	5.7	3.6	10.2	152	7	4.3
Ramona the Pest (5.0)	100	455	13.6	4.3	6.4		6.9	141	7	
	100	465	23.0	4.5	9.6		4.5	139	8	
	100	445	30.5	4.2	12.0	9.3	2.9	139	10	8.3
Chocolate Fever (4.9)	100	433	19.2	4.2	7.7		5.3	130	7	
	100	412	5.7	3.9	1.3		17.1	123	1	
	100	454	12.2	4.4	5.5	4.8	8.1	136	6	4.7
Allie's Wild	100	468	17.6	4.5	7.2		4.4	144	9	

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Surprise (4.9)										
	100	418	16.4	4.0	6.4		3.9	131	7	
	100	442	10.5	4.3	5.2	6.3	8.8	139	6	7.3
The Tiny Parents (4.9)	100	449	9.9	4.3	4.3		9.1	133	5	
	100	501	19.0	4.8	9.9		5.4	152	9	
	100	458	14.0	4.4	6.6	6.9	7.1	139	7	7.0
Alaskan Adventure (4.8)	100	441	12.5	4.2	4.9		8.0	134	6	
	100	412	23.2	4.0	8.4		4.4	131	7	
	100	458	15.3	4.4	5.3	6.2	6.5	128	6	6.3
Goblins in the Castle (4.8)	100	419	15.1	4.0	5.6		6.5	134	7	
	100	434	15.0	4.3	6.1		6.5	133	6	
	100	429	14.1	4.1	6.0	5.9	7.1	135	6	6.3
Scream of the Cat (4.8)	100	461	12.2	4.4	4.9		8.1	132		
	100	470	14.8	4.6	7.8		6.7	145		
	100	454	17.8	4.3	6.9	6.5	6.6	132	6	6.0
Harvey's Horrible...	100	413	10.3	4.0	2.7		9.3	129	4	

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(4.7)										
	100	403	19.0	3.9	5.9		5.2	119	6	
	100	397	10.6	3.8	2.5	3.7	8.2	124	4	4.7
Escape From Fire Mountain (5.7)	100	475	14.6	4.7	7.9		6.8	147	9	
	100	425	19.8	4.1	6.7		5.1	122	6	
	100	432	8.8	4.1	2.4	5.7	10.8	126	3	6.0
The Beast (4.7)	100	414	9.0	3.9	2.6		10.7	127	3	
	100	480	12.5	4.5	5.5		7.9	139	6	
	100	437	7.1	4.2	2.1	3.4	11.4	125	3	4.0
Lily's Crossing (4.6)	100	461	11.0	4.4	4.2		8.1	135	6	
	100	432	16.0	4.2	6.2		5.8	131	7	
	100	436	14.1	4.2	4.7	5.0	7.1	124	5	6.0
The Mystery Box (4.6)	100	424	11.8	4.1	2.8		7.8	122	4	
	100	442	16.0	4.3	6.5		5.9	138	7	
	100	462	13.8	4.5	5.7	5.0	7.2	144	7	6.0
Orp Goes to	100	410	10.2	4.0	3.4		8.5	130	5	

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the Hoop (4.6)										
	100	366	12.2	3.5	3.1		8.1	119	3	
	100	447	9.7	4.2	3.6	3.4	10.2	130	4	4.0
James and the Giant Peach (4.5)	100	418	18.6	4.0	7.3		5.6	132	7	
	100	459	13.0	4.2	5.4		7.8	138	6	
	100	503	14.5	4.9	8.3	7.0	6.6	151	8	6.0
Mrs. Abercorn... (4.5)	100	397	18.0	3.9	5.7		4.5	123	7	
	100	440	31.6	4.2	12.0		3.3	135	9	
	100	417	14.3	3.9	4.8	7.5	6.8	122	5	7.0
The Bunnysitters (4.5)	100	442	11.1	4.2	5.1		9.0	140	6	
	100	476	9.8	4.6	4.8		10.1	139	5	
	100	478	9.0	4.6	4.1	4.7	11.0	140	5	5.3
Scary Scary Huckleberry (4.4)	100	436	10.0	4.1	4.7		10.0	140	5	
	100	421	9.2	4.2	4.7		9.9	141	6	

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	100	371	8.9	3.5	1.8	3.7	10.8	122	3	4.7
Sport(4.4)	100	405	15.1	3.9	5.1		6.6	125	6	
	100	407	13.8	3.8	3.3		7.2	116	4	
	100	404	10.6	3.9	3.1	3.8	9.2	123	3	4.3
Tale of the Campire Vampires (4.4)	100	446	17.6	4.4	7.0		5.7	132	7	
	100	448	14.1	4.4	5.8		6.7	135	7	
	100	464	10.7	4.5	3.9	5.6	9.2	128	4	6.0
What Its All About (4.3)	100	414	14.5	4.0	5.2		6.8	129	6	
	100	394	9.5	3.7	2.3		10.3	123	3	
	100	414	11.1	4.0	4.0	3.8	9.0	131	5	4.7
Dunc's Doll (4.3)	100	416	12.0	4.0	3.5		8.5	121	3	
	100	423	9.5	4.1	3.1		10.4	128	3	
	100	408	13.8	3.8	4.3	3.6	6.8	123	5	3.7
Making the Team (4.3)	100	436	15.6	4.2	5.9		6.5	129	6	
	100	402	9.0	3.8	1.7		11.0	118	2	
	100	375	14.2	3.6	3.0	3.5	7.0	110	3	3.7
Otherwise	100	406	10.7	4.0	4.2		8.8	131	5	

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Known as... (4.2)										
	100	411	12.7	4.0	5.6		7.8	135	6	
	100	413	19.2	4.1	7.5	5.8	5.3	130	7	6.0
Then Again, Maybe... (4.2)	100	419	10.0	4.0	4.4		10.0	128	4	
	100	437	9.8	4.2	3.7		10.1	133	4	
	100	392	7.4	3.8	2.2	3.4	10.9	129	3	3.7
Young Indiana Jones (4.2)	100	437	9.8	4.2	2.9		10.1	123	3	
	100	464	9.4	4.4	3.7		10.2	132	4	
	100	449	11.2	4.4	4.6	3.7	8.5	131	3	3.3
The Gift of the Pirate Queen(4.1)	100	439	14.1	4.3	4.2		7.1	122	5	
	100	484	15.6	4.7	7.2		5.9	140	7	
	100	446	14.2	4.3	6.5	6.0	7.0	141	7	6.3
Wayside School(4.1)	100	430	8.1	4.1	2.1		10.5	128	3	
	100	442	9.8	4.1	4.0		8.9	139	4	
	100	445	8.1	4.2	1.9	2.7	12.2	125	2	3.0

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Gooflumps... (4.1)	100	412	10.6	4.0	4.6		9.5	135	5	
	100	425	11.0	3.9	3.5		8.9	128	4	
	100	473	13.0	4.6	6.3	4.8	7.6	144	7	5.3
What is the Teacher's Toupee... (4.0)	100	458	15.3	4.5	6.6		6.5	139	7	
	100	426	13.8	4.0	4.5		7.4	134	6	
	100	477	15.8	4.6	7.1	6.1	5.9	142	8	7.0
Goosebumps... (4.0)	100	386	13.0	3.7	3.7		7.7	123	4	
	100	449	12.4	4.3	4.9		7.8	135	6	
	100	441	9.7	4.3	3.5	4.0	10.1	133	4	4.7
It's New!... (4.0)	100	439	7.0	4.2	2.7		14.1	135	3	
	100	439	15.6	4.2	6.2		6.5	134	7	
	100	468	7.8	4.4	3.2	4.0	12.4	140	4	4.7